


LETTERS OF  
RICHARD MEUX BENSON

S.S.J.E., COWLEY

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RICHARD MEUX BENSON, AET. *cir.* 47.

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# 44788

# LETTERS OF RICHARD MEUX BENSON

STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH ; FOUNDER AND FIRST SUPERIOR OF  
THE SOCIETY OF S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, COWLEY

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY  
G. CONGREVE  
AND  
W. H. LONGRIDGE  
OF THE SAME SOCIETY

*WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR*

BY THE  
RIGHT REV. A. C. A. HALL, D.D.  
BISHOP OF VERMONT, U.S.A.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.  
LONDON : 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus, W.  
OXFORD : 9 High Street  
MILWAUKEE, U.S.A. : The Young Churchman Co.

First impression, 1916

## PREFACE

THIS selection from such of Father Benson's letters as have come into our hands is made in the hope of handing on to another generation some reflection of the influence which he exercised upon our own. No Life of him is likely to be written. The few who survive among the companions of his earlier years know how completely his real life was hid with CHRIST in GOD. Even those who lived under the same roof with him knew but a part. When he returned to the Mission House after some work or distant journey, we never expected to hear him speak to us of anything that had happened while away, whether of failure or success. All that we knew was that, as he had gone out to each work armed with prayer and self-discipline, so on his return he reverently left with GOD in silent prayer and thanksgiving the results of the work. These strenuous spiritual efforts in Missions, Retreats, and manifold other labours never left him exhausted: rather they seemed to raise him to the experience of a higher communion with GOD, to be cherished in reverent silence, and

carried straight on into the next work as the power by which it was to be met and accomplished. Thus his life was pre-eminently a hidden life : there is little for a biographer to record. What was given to God through so many years with severe reserve must be reverently left in silence as God's secret.

It is interesting to find in one of his letters his own impression in regard to the biography of another, whose life was almost equally withdrawn from observation as his own. Writing from Boston, U.S., October 10, 1892, to a friend in England, he says : "Perhaps it is a token of Keble's saintliness that his life is left hidden with CHRIST in all the obscurity of the original Apostles. We cannot now have a biography of him. Those who knew about his daily life, and could have pretended to sketch his character for us, are gone. His life was not before the world as Pusey's was. The secret power operating far and wide is what none can tell."

But while so large a part of Father Benson's life was hidden, and for the rest he always avoided public observation as much as possible, yet, as the spiritual guide of so many souls, he became, through force of circumstances, an indefatigable letter-writer. And it is his letters



which reveal to us most of what may be known of an exceptionally influential and retiring character. His correspondence must have been enormous. Day by day, after visiting in the parish, taking Confirmation classes, and seeing the many persons who came to him for Confession or other purposes, and then, perhaps, preaching at Evensong in the Iron Church, he would sit down after Compline to deal with the day's letters, or with the pile that had accumulated during his absence from home. This was a pastoral work which he took very seriously. He wrote rapidly, without stopping to weigh details of expression or arrangement, but always as one who lived in close communion with God and turned everything habitually to spiritual profit. If he speaks of anything that is going on in the world, it is almost always to pass on to its bearings upon the kingdom of God. The conversion and ingathering of the heathen, the renewal of the Church's pristine purity and glory in the persecution of the last days, and the coming of CHRIST are constantly in his mind. Or when he strikes a more individual note, it is generally deadness to the world, the blessedness and fruitfulness of suffering, the joy and power of the risen and ascended Life which we already share, the Communion of Saints,

the longing to depart and be with CHRIST, upon which he delights to dwell.

Another characteristic which the reader will observe throughout these letters is that, whenever the writer is dealing with theological points, it is always the moral and spiritual value of Christian dogma which is his supreme interest. He is always passing on through doctrine to growth in faith, hope, and love, to practice, and to life in God. He is never satisfied with the mere intellectual grasp of mysteries ; he is always pressing on to live by them, to reach the interior knowledge of experience which only obedient love can attain. We do not learn to love by knowing ; but to know by loving.

In the spiritual vitality and sustained elevation of soul which these letters disclose, those who knew Father Benson's daily life will recognize the fruit of the long hours he devoted to prayer and contemplation while the rest of the household slept. At the same time those letters, or portions of letters, which are written in a lighter vein bear witness to the cordiality and pleasant humour, the "comfort of love" that flowed from his pen when the object was to cheer some feeble but well-meaning soul.

The first portion of this collection consists of letters to members of the Society of S. John the

Evangelist, extending over a period from its earliest days almost to the death of its Founder in his ninety-first year. In arranging these letters we have not followed the strict chronological order, but have grouped together those written to the several Fathers and Brothers. The letters in each of these groups follow the chronological order, but the groups themselves are arranged in the order of priority of the date with which each group begins. The remaining letters, written to a number of persons, both men and women, outside the Society, follow strictly in the order of their dates, except in a few cases where these are lacking, and have to be conjectured.

We are very grateful to all those who have so kindly entrusted to us letters in their possession, and allowed us to make copies of them. Together with our thanks we must express our great regret that, owing to limited space, we have not been able to find room for a considerable portion of the material placed at our disposal. Obligated as we were to make a selection, it was often difficult to decide between letters of equal value and interest ; and for every one we decided to include we had to regret the exclusion of another, which seemed in some respects even more desirable. We refer to this necessity of selection, because we shall keep as a permanent

treasure for the Society copies of a number of letters unavoidably omitted from this volume, and are not without hope that some day it may be possible to issue a second series which may be found in no way inferior to the first in value.

As an introduction to the letters we have prefixed an article by the Bishop of Vermont, which appeared in the *Church Quarterly Review* in April, 1915. The Bishop of Vermont, formerly Father Hall, S.S.J.E., was one of the earliest members of the Society, and there is no one now living who could supply a sketch of Father Benson's life so full, and drawn from such intimate association with him. For permission to reprint this article we are indebted to the kindness of the Bishop and of the Editor of the *Review*.

At the end, by way of giving some further idea of Father Benson's character and manner of life, we have added in an appendix an extract from a sermon preached by the Bishop of Oxford in the Church of the Society at Cowley, on Sexagesima Sunday, February 7, 1915, for permission to print which we are grateful to his Lordship and to the Editor of the *Church Times*; also portions of two letters written by the late Bishop Churton of Nassau, in which he speaks of a visit paid to the island by Father

Benson in 1903 ; *An Appreciation*, by Dr. Darwell Stone, reprinted by kind permission from the *Guardian* ; a portion of a paper contributed by Father Puller to the *Cowley Evangelist* ; *A Pen Portrait*, signed B. W. M. ; and *A Memory*, by a Father of the Society of S. John the Evangelist ; for permission to make use of which we desire to thank the Editors of the *Church Times* and of *Comment and Criticism* respectively ; and lastly, a sermon preached by Father Congreve in the Society's Church on the Sunday morning after Father Benson's death.

Our thanks are also due to the Rev. V. S. S. Coles for the memorial lines which appear at the beginning of the book ; and to the Rev. W. H. Draper for those which stand at its close.

G. C.

W. H. L.

MISSION HOUSE,  
COWLEY S. JOHN,  
February 21, 1916.

“So near and yet so far”—so near when need  
Or pain or helplessness had asked for aid ;  
So far uplifted by detachment high,  
That we, beholding him, might be afraid  
To ask for what he hasted to concede.  
Lofty and lowly, near and far, indeed  
Separate he walked, and yet the friend of all :  
So sure to help, so ready at our call,  
Humble in height, great in humility.

V. S. S. C.

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# INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR <sup>1</sup>

BY THE

RIGHT REV. ARTHUR C. A. HALL, D.D.

*Bishop of Vermont.*

WITHOUT a doubt Richard Meux Benson <sup>2</sup> was one of the greatest spiritual forces in the English Church during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He is naturally thought of, and will in after years doubtless be chiefly remembered, as a leader and organizer of what is technically called the Religious Life. The marvellous development of Religious Communities amongst us since 1850, with their numerous institutions for works of mercy, spiritual and corporal, owed much to him directly and indirectly. The Sisterhoods of All Saints', Clewer, Wantage, East Grinstead, and Ditchingham were all in existence, with others, before Father Benson entered on his life of special dedication ; but, apart from the impulse and encouragement which the foundation at Cowley gave to such enterprises, these and other Communities, more particularly as their originators passed away, naturally turned for help and guidance to the little company of priests who were themselves

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from the *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Born July 6, 1824 ; died January 14, 1915. R.I.P.

living under rule. For Religious Orders of men, save for the brave but ill-guided ventures of Brother Ignatius at Claydon and at Norwich, Father Benson and his companions really blazed the way. And none rejoiced more truly than did he at the spread of the idea and its development in varied forms. He would be the last to claim any monopoly of vocations for Cowley. The Spirit bloweth where and as it listeth. Other similar efforts, not exactly on his lines, which seemed likely to divert men from his institute, were welcomed with genuine interest and sympathy. The Society of the HOLY GHOST at Stoke in early days, the Community of the Resurrection later, the Order of the Holy Cross in the United States, and the Oxford Mission to Calcutta would all bear witness to this. Numbers Father Benson no more desired for his Community than popularity or reputation for himself. These were to be dreaded rather than desired. The Religious Life could only exist healthily in an individual or in a Community as a response to a divine vocation. This was his constant teaching. A vocation is to be tested ; wherever recognized it must be faithfully carried out by the recipient and respected by others. Any consideration of utility or of mere economy as a motive for the establishment of a Brotherhood or Sisterhood he would scorn. All sorts of external works, helpful and valuable, would be undertaken by a Community, some of which could hardly be otherwise attempted ; but behind all the activity of its members must be the



simple and absolute surrender of self, with all one is or has, to GOD, to live in close and undistracted fellowship with Him, after the example and in obedience to the counsels of His Incarnate Son. Accordingly this was the declaration put forth at the beginning of the Cowley Brotherhood :

“The Society of the Mission Priests of S. John the Evangelist has been commenced in humble submission, as it is devoutly hoped, to a call of Almighty God.

“The Society has been formed for the cultivation of a life dedicated to GOD according to the principles of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, and will occupy itself in works both Missionary and Educational, at home and abroad, for the advancement of CHRIST’s Kingdom, as GOD in His good Providence may seem to call.”

The founding of the Cowley Society was itself a development, to which previous years of devotion and self-discipline had led up. Trained by a pious mother, to whom he was deeply attached, Richard Benson from childhood accustomed himself to bear hardness as well as to engage in severe study. At Oxford he was a contemporary of Liddon and Richard West as Senior Students of Christ Church, and the last when he died of the members of the old foundation of the House. He gained a double-second in classics and mathematics—then of course the only final schools—in 1847, and the Kennicott Hebrew Scholarship the following year, when he was ordained and began his ministry as curate at Surbiton, where he afterwards contributed largely to the building of a new church. Benson was

from the first and always a true disciple of the old Tractarians, in life as in doctrine, and exemplified their characteristics of devotion, reserve, austerity, and self-effacement. In 1850 he was appointed Vicar of Cowley, the old parish adjoining Littlemore, with its village and church (which he restored) two or three miles from Magdalen Bridge, up to which its parochial limits extended. The parish had been ordinarily served by a resident Student of Christ Church, who walked out for the Sunday services. Archbishop Longley had been vicar while tutor and censor of the House. Father Benson wished to make the new church in Cowley St. John a memorial to him; but appreciation of his leadership in the first Lambeth Conference failed to draw out the needed contributions.

As Vicar of the old parish, Mr. Benson, in a life of retirement, study, and devotion was preparing himself for whatever God might call him to. The call came, as it seemed, to missionary work in India,<sup>1</sup> and he was on the point of leaving England, when in deference to Bishop Wilberforce's urging, he gave up the plan and devoted himself to providing for the spiritual needs of the new suburb of Oxford (now the largest parish of the city) which was beginning to spring up within the territorial limits of Cowley, though quite distinct from the old village. Here the Iron Church (afterwards twice enlarged) was built and named in honour of S. John the Evangelist, the old

<sup>1</sup> See p. 227. Letter to the Warden of S. Augustine's College, Canterbury.

church being S. James's. In both churches Mr. Benson ministered, with assistance after a while as the new district developed, establishing himself in lodgings on the Iffley Road. Here we may recognize a great act of obedience, in the surrender of cherished plans for the fulfilment of immediate duties and in deference to the voice of authority. And richly was the surrender rewarded. The hundredfold in this world was given. Instead of going himself a solitary missionary, Benson was enabled later on to establish two houses of his Order in India, at Bombay and Poona, as centres of manifold missionary influence, as well as branches of the Community in America and South Africa. No wonder Bishop Wilberforce was prepared later to regard favourably the establishment of the Brotherhood, having witnessed the absence of self-will in the plans and life of its founder. To this period of Father Benson's ministry belong four books, by no means the least valuable of his many publications: *Redemption*, a course of sermons, full of illuminating doctrine for those who will take the pains to study—not merely to read—the book; *The Wisdom of the Son of David*, an exposition of Proverbs i–ix; *The Divine Rule of Prayer*, an exposition of the LORD'S Prayer with various paraphrases; and the well-known *Manual of Intercessory Prayer*. These show the profundity of both thought and devotion which always marked the author, with his wide range of prayerful sympathy. It was during this period

too that the Retreats and Parochial Missions which, largely under the influence and guidance of the Society of S. John, were to become so widespread, were first attempted in the Church of England, in somewhat experimental fashion. In both of these movements Mr. Benson took part. It was natural when an American priest (the Rev. Charles C. Grafton, afterwards Bishop of Fond du Lac) came over to England with the hope of gaining help for the formation of a Brotherhood, that Dr. Pusey should advise him to consult Mr. Benson. It was thus that the way was opened for the realization of the hopes and prayers of many years. On S. John the Evangelist's Day in 1866, after a year or more of immediate preparation, Father Benson, Father Grafton, and Father O'Neill made their vows, and the Society was formed. Another American priest, the Rev. Oliver S. Prescott, joined soon after, and in 1870 four novices, including the next Superior, Father Page, were received.

Everything in those early days was most simple and most real. For a couple of years the Fathers lived in crowded quarters in a simple house on the Iffley Road, the Day Hours being said in a little oratory, while the other services were held in the Iron Church close by. In 1868 the Mission House in Marston Street was occupied; and here were opportunities for varied forms of ministration. Large Retreats for Priests were held, not less than seventy being gathered in the chapel at the top of the house under such con-

ductors as Bishop King, then Principal of Cuddesdon, and Mr. Richard Randall.<sup>1</sup> Clergymen were received as guests, whether with a view to testing their vocation for a dedicated life, or that after a season of retirement they might return to parochial work with renewed devotion and spiritual power. The Mission House was licensed by the University authorities as "Benson's Hall" for undergraduates who, desiring to prepare for the ministry, could not afford the ordinary college expenses. When Keble College was opened this provision was no longer needed, but it had meanwhile served a useful purpose. A South African missionary bishop, an archdeacon in the same province, and another in India were thus helped on to Holy Orders, with others; but the chief reason for mentioning the undertaking here is that it was just an instance of Father Benson's readiness, at the cost of inconvenience, to embrace any opportunity for the advancement of CHRIST's Kingdom. The Mission Priests were not to have everything snug and comfortable at home.

It is here to be noted that in the founding of the Society all was done in absolute loyalty to Church authority. Any other course at any time would have been abhorrent to Father Benson. Plans were fully put before the Bishop of Oxford and his blessing asked. An interesting correspondence shows Bishop Wilberforce's readi-

<sup>1</sup> Vicar of All Saints', Clifton, and afterwards Dean of Chichester.



ness to go further in the regulation of the Community, and Father Benson's care that in an experimental stage neither the bishop nor the Brotherhood should be compromised. All external work would be controlled by ecclesiastical authority, diocesan and parochial; but the internal life of the Brotherhood should be free like the life of clergymen living singly. To this the bishop, after carefully weighing the matter, agreed, promising to give public preachers' licences to any clergymen residing with Father Benson so long as he could approve of the institution generally without committing himself absolutely to all its details. "This (the bishop wrote) is what I think you desire, and I think it is the best course." A characteristic anecdote may be told in this connection of Bishop Wilberforce's dealing with one of the American priests :

"Mr. — (he said), you understand that I cannot legally license you for more than two Sundays; but you will see that this paper with my signature is undated, so that it is always in force, unless I hear of your doing something objectionable, in which case I shall promptly date the licence and it will expire the next week."

The attitude of Bishop Mackarness to the Society is shown by the fact that when, during the first year of his episcopate, a novice sought from him ordination to the diaconate, the bishop said that he thought he ought to be assured by examination of the rule that there was employment appropriate for so young a man and a deacon. Having read the rule he expressed himself

satisfied, and ordained the man without any other title than his membership in the Brotherhood. When the Constitution was finally drawn up, and both it and the Rule formally approved by Bishop Mackarness as the elected Visitor of the Society, Father Benson rejoiced to lead the Brethren over to Cuddesdon to receive the bishop's blessing. Father Benson's relation to successive Bishops of Oxford, during the time when he was a beneficed priest in the diocese and Superior of the Society, has been dwelt on in part for the sake of illustrating his general attitude of loyal obedience to constituted authority.<sup>1</sup> A like loyalty he always showed to the Anglican position as to doctrine, discipline, and worship, as representing true Catholicism. Extravagant presentations of doctrine, with their corresponding expressions in worship, he deplored. But his line was not that of protest but rather of positive instruction which, for those who accepted it, would

<sup>1</sup> The following dates may be given :

1850, R. M. B. Vicar of Cowley.

1859, The Iron Church erected. Opened October 19.

1866, The Society founded.

1868, The old Mission House opened.

1870, R. M. B. Vicar of Cowley S. John, separated from the old parish.

1884, Constitution approved by Bishop Mackarness, Sept. 22.

1886, R. M. B. resigned the parish, the Rev. W. Scott becoming Vicar of Cowley S. John, and ministering in the new church of SS. Mary and John, the Fathers still using the Iron Church until their Collegiate Church was dedicated in 1896.

1890, R. M. B. resigned as Superior of the Society.

1901, The present Mission House opened.

bar out erroneous conceptions. His exposition of the Discourse at Capernaum (S. John vi) in *Bible Teachings* is typical of his invariable method of teaching the truth rather than of directly combating error. Attention may well be called anew to this balanced statement of Eucharistic doctrine. When asked on one occasion why he did not continue (as he had intended) the *Evangelist Library Catechism*, a mine of valuable theological definitions, Father Benson replied that he could not teach the Seven Sacraments, and that nobody would buy or use the book if he didn't. Disproportionate teaching he greatly disliked, such as that which he once characterized as "Preaching Seven Sacraments and mostly practising one" (Confession). The supreme importance of realizing the dignity of our regenerate condition through Baptism as the only basis for a true conception of the Eucharist is insisted on both in *Bible Teachings* and in his illuminating *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*. Thus he wrote in a letter :

"Reservation after the Roman manner is objectionable to my mind not because it expresses the Real Presence in the Sacrament too strongly, but because it implies a denial of the Real Presence in the baptized. Rome purchases clear definitions by exhausting the atmosphere. If the daily office is reduced to Jewish measure of emptiness, we are reduced to empty Jewish worshippers. The Creed gives Baptism the greatest dignity among the Sacraments, mentioning it and none other. Roman theologians of course give the Holy Eucharist the greatest dignity. Why? Because they have been able to change the mystery in the one case into a miracle. They could not do this in the other case where the change was more personal. So practically they let the mystery evaporate altogether."



Two points in Father Benson's theology are here emphasized. He had a dread of over-definition. In a perfectly exact definition concerning the things of GOD, he would say, one thing you may be sure of, that it is wrong. The mystery has been lost in cramping the divine operation into the limited terms of human thought. The present work of the HOLY GHOST, applying the merits of CHRIST and making us one with Him, was another constant theme. "The Blood of JESUS can cleanse the foulest sinner, but it cannot extinguish the flames of hell" was a saying that represented his teaching about the Atonement. While put in different words the leading thought of Dr. Robert Moberly's teaching about our LORD as the Representative Penitent is to be found in Father Benson's sermons on *Redemption*, and so is much of Dr. Du Bose's teaching in *Soteriology*, though Father Benson would have shrunk from some of the latter writer's terminology.

As a preacher Father Benson was wonderful. That would probably be the word that the great majority of persons would apply to his preaching. He could not be, and would not have wished to be, a popular preacher. But impressive he most certainly was, intellectually and spiritually. Didactic, even magisterial, never controversial or argumentative, but prophetic, telling forth the truth, with little, perhaps, of oratorical persuasiveness; the truth should make its own appeal to hearts and consciences, and this assuredly it did

with all the force of absolute conviction and sincerity on the part of the speaker. Father Benson once suggested as a possible defect in Dr. Liddon's preaching that he assumed too much the role of an advocate, abandoning the position of authority which befitted the preacher. Each man, of course, had his own gift and filled his own place. "Thus saith the LORD" was certainly the tone of the Father's preaching, profoundly theological, deeply spiritual, but without any display of learning. He had studied and was familiar with the Fathers, scholastic and ascetic writers, and Anglican divines; but all were digested and used without quotation for the elucidation of Holy Scripture, which was ever the ground-work of his teaching. Of course his sermons were often far above the heads, as well as the experience, of his hearers. Dr. King once said, "We follow him with a telescope, and now and then catch sight of him soaring in the heavens." Not infrequently his sermons would take the form of soliloquies or meditations in the presence of the people rather than of addresses to them. The college scouts and Oxford artisans, who with their families formed a large part of the population of Cowley S. John in the time of Father Benson's charge of the parish, understood little of his teaching or aims; but they knew they had a saint among them, a man who preached and lived the New Testament life. The sternness of his preaching was sometimes disheartening, as when in Boston he reckoned that,

while the number of the Israelites in the Wilderness was just about that of the population of the city, only two entered the Promised Land ; where-upon a lady in the congregation remarked that she knew her spiritual guide would be one of those two, and as it was not likely that she would be the other, she might as well give up trying.

In connection with Father Benson's prophetic utterance it should be mentioned that in the absolute absence of self-consciousness in the preacher, absorbed in his message, all the hesitancy of speech which was noticeable in ordinary conversation entirely disappeared. His language was faultless, though he had a vocabulary of his own, as well as lines of thought, which had to be mastered before one could easily follow his discourse. How the intellectual preparation was made for his continuous preaching one wondered. Years of study and care in composition must have stored the mind and trained the faculties of expression.

Doubtless it was in Retreats, where he was leading devout or at least earnest people to God, that Father Benson's peculiar gifts shone most. His Retreat addresses were remarkable. Here his voice, in preaching often harsh or rasping, was easy and delicate, and his diction exquisite, as he poured out his soul in reflection and aspiration. The theme of the meditations was sustained and worked out in wonderful completeness, if the exegesis was sometimes strained. The same may be said of his devotional writings. *Benedictus*

*Dominus*, *The Final Passover*, the *Spiritual Readings*, and other courses of meditations for the Christian year are the work of a spiritual genius, to whom a certain licence for eccentricity must be allowed. The commentary on the Psalms, with characteristic paradox entitled *The War Songs of the Prince of Peace*, he probably regarded as his *magnum opus*. On this he spent untold labour, carrying the manuscript about with him during the last years of his activity, for work in all spare hours. The leading idea of the book, by which the interpretation of a psalm is largely determined by the symbolical value of the Hebrew numeral letter that marks its place in the Psalter, had been suggested by Dr. Milo Mahan of the General Theological Seminary in New York (an uncle of the late Admiral Alfred T. Mahan) in his work *Palmoni, or the Numerals of Scripture*. Many will doubt whether the arrangement of the Psalms will bear the weight that is thus placed on it. But none can fail to recognize the spiritual insight of the commentator, even though they may think that much of the comment is read into rather than drawn out from the Psalms.

As a spiritual director Father Benson truly exemplified the dictum that a priest should be as a lion in the pulpit but a lamb in the confessional. Severe of course he could be on occasion, and uncompromising with evil in any form he always was, but wonderfully patient and considerate, and careful not to overdrive the flock. Probably the awe with which every one regarded him, on

account of his goodness and his greatness, and from the sense of a certain separateness, was least felt when seeking his ministry in confession, for then his tenderness would be specially manifest. The heart of fire towards God he truly had, and the heart of steel towards himself, but not less the heart of flesh towards his brethren. If in his Community he was the master, no less was he the servant of all, ready at any time to be interrupted to deal with any sort of need or difficulty, leading on the willing and shaming any who lagged by his own example of utter and absolute self-abnegation. His nights alone could be claimed for undisturbed prayer, study, and writing, and to these exercises they were largely given. At Cowley many in divers parts of the world felt there was one to whom difficult moral and spiritual problems could be referred with the certainty of promptly receiving a judgement, not infallible, but clear, weighty, and absolutely free from any bias of worldly considerations. There was never a doubt that at any cost the counsellor would himself be prepared to take the line which he recommended, that he had been long living by the principles which underlay his advice.

His personal asceticism, never obtruded, and never overcast with gloom, was to all who witnessed it a marvel. Perhaps it would be more exact to say the result of his asceticism, for he seemed to have risen superior to ordinary necessities of food and sleep, and to have become indifferent to pain and discomfort; as when he



preached a University sermon on one Palm Sunday, returning afterwards to the Iron Church to take the midday celebration, with his forehead and one eye bandaged on account of a large carbuncle, or when he seized the opportunity of a sprained ankle that confined him to the house to hobble about the library with its ladder to rearrange the books. His physical frame (which Dr. Littledale described as a combination of catgut and iron) had been schooled to endure hardness until it seemed to have been raised above the weaknesses of other mortals. The inability of Christians in these days to practise exterior mortification, as our forefathers in the Faith were wont to do, Father Benson regarded as a humiliation to be accepted in penitence for general self-indulgence and loss of spiritual power. He rejoiced when he felt that he could add a little to the austerity of the life of the Community, as in the institution of a strict quarterly fast on certain vigils, when every one was bound privately to recite the whole Psalter. It was a real trouble to him when the annual month's Retreat of the Society was shortened to a fortnight, hardly considering, perhaps, that few besides himself were equal to serving as conductor for the longer period.

It would be a great mistake for any to think of Father Benson as a narrow ecclesiastic, or a recluse with no vision beyond the walls of his cell. As has been implied, his mind was highly cultivated, his tastes were wide. Literature,

poetry, music, art, history, and science all appealed to him. His remarks on contemporary thought and politics were shrewd. Little escaped his quick observation. Deadness to the world and its aims, he constantly taught, ought to expand and quicken interest in all God's works, and in all the manifestations of His mind and purposes. To the Christian, as to CHRIST, the grave is the gate to a new life.

Doubtless, as with other eminent servants of God, Father Benson had the defects of his qualities. He had prejudices, which prevented his being quite fair to those whom, for various reasons, he distrusted—Mr. Gladstone, for instance, Newman, Broad Churchmen generally, and University Liberals. He had no use for schemes for social betterment that were not distinctly Christian. Christianity was to him the sole source of human regeneration. Other movements, philanthropic or religious, in India or in England—or in America—were counterfeits, devices of Satan for holding men back from what could alone avail. From the philosophical and religious principles imbibed in his youth he never departed, though he contrived to bring under them much of later thought. Difficulties of belief he probably never experienced; his temptations would have been of another sort. He did not find it easy to devolve duties and responsibilities, and probably attempted to carry alone a greater burden than any one could bear, combining the charge of a large parish with the



rule of a religious community, without the aid for many years of subordinate officers, with continual ministerial engagements in London and elsewhere, and an overwhelming correspondence. If the giving of a constitution to the Society and its more complete organization had not been so long delayed, some serious troubles and losses might have been avoided. But what were limitations or possible mistakes of this sort in comparison with the service he was allowed to render the Church in the revival of the Religious Life for men on sound and spiritual lines, with his own splendid example of what the Religious Life, as the perfecting of Christian life, should mean, in the entire dedication of all gifts and powers to be strenuously and unintermittently used for God's glory, in a life of simple detachment from the world and of fellowship with Him?

The word "detachment" (a favourite word of his) recalls a marked characteristic of Father Benson's life. There was a certain separateness (aloofness would not exactly express the impression), a self-containedness, which was never broken down, however intimate his intercourse might be with friends or brethren. The secret of this was, of course, the greater intimacy and closer fellowship which was ever cherished with Almighty God, not merely in Whose presence, but in Whose companionship he ever walked. This veil of detachment, through which gleams of natural affection were occasionally allowed to flash, gave a calmness amid all the separations

incidental to missionary work, in bereavements, in defections and disappointments, in financial anxieties. None of these things moved Father Benson. With the Apostle he could and did rejoice in tribulations, always bearing about the dying of the LORD JESUS, that the life also of JESUS might be made manifest in His servant.

The story of the last years of Father Benson's earthly life is infinitely pathetic, yet sublime in its triumph. "Perfected through sufferings." Blind, deaf, crippled with rheumatism, having outlived all his contemporaries, condemned to inactivity in the scene of his greatest activities; venerated with filial affection by the Community which owned its existence to him, but over which he had ceased to rule, and almost necessarily witnessing certain developments that did not commend themselves to his judgement; unable even to officiate at the altar in the Chapel of the Mission House, but wheeled into the Church for his daily Communion, never omitted until the day before his passing through the veil—with mental powers scarcely impaired, and spiritual powers in no wise lessened—so he lasted on well into his ninety-first year, like S. John bearing witness in life, if no longer by word, to the message he had received, full of ardent desire to be taken, yet patiently waiting for the call.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, LORD JESUS."

ARTHUR C. A. HALL,  
*Bishop of Vermont.*



## PART I

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### LETTERS TO MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST







RICHARD MEUX BENSON, AET. 64.

*(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, Ltd.)*



# Letters of Father Benson

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## PART I

### Letters to Members of the Society of S. John the Evangelist

1. *To Brother Hall (afterwards Father Hall and Bishop of Vermont).—On his Ordination to the Diaconate.*

BOSTON, U.S.A.,  
Dec. 18, 1870.

MY DEAR BROTHER HALL,

Advent ends very brightly for us while we think of our dear LORD calling you to-day to carry on the work of preparation for His coming in glory. May GOD grant you much strength and joy in the exercise of this ministry, and much reward in the day of His appearing. I am very anxious to hear all the particulars about the Ordination. I hope you will write me in detail. Probably your letters containing the account will cross mine. I do not doubt that you found the bishop<sup>1</sup> very kind and sympathizing. It is very nice that he takes such an interest in our work. I should be glad if we could put Boston

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Mackarness.

into the Diocese of Oxford. It seems to me very likely that Coles and Halliwell, etc., may be staying at the Mission House.

I was specially urging the duty of Ember Week upon a largish Bible-class which I am holding here on Fridays. It makes one realize the Communion of Saints when one considers the effect of the prayers throughout the world upon the work of each bishop—the accumulated force of all the prayers coming forth in each diocese without being weakened by being distributed. It is a comfort to those who are ordained now, to feel that the Ember duties are so much better attended to generally than they used to be. May you, and those who were ordained with you, experience an abundant result. God is, no doubt, quickening the prayers of His people with a view to some special struggles which are awaiting His Church. As yet we only see the cloud like a man's hand, and yet we sometimes shudder. What, then, will it be when the full storm bursts? We must see that the rain stop us not. It need not stop us, for it will not hurt us if we are faithful to our covenant, as the prophet who ran before Ahab to Jezreel. The world's madness will hurry on its own ruin, but the seed of God shall abide safely. The corn and the wine and the oil shall hear their cry, and multiply in our hands for their need. But the security of abundance of grace to be supplied through our ministry does not make the prospect of a life-long struggle (and it may be a long life's struggle) less overpowering to the con-

temptation of the natural heart. We are a human agency for the ministration of divine gifts, and the divine promises have to be secured by the faithfulness of the human will. One would not, indeed, be so sensitive to outward trouble if one were less conscious of human infirmity ; but, alas ! one is conscious of that, not only as a source of passive incapacity, but of active unfaithfulness ; and so one shrinks when one ought to be bold, and the heart gets at times overclouded. Whereas the participation of our LORD's dying weakness ought to make our consolation to increase the more by manifesting within us the Life of JESUS which our mortality does not enfeeble. No outward troubles can master us if we are but true to the Life of GOD in our own selves. That life will assert itself in all our ministry. No circumstances can be unfavourable to that which is supernatural. Only we must be true to the Truth, without being either eager or downcast, and in due time we shall surely reap. But that due time cannot be here. If we will be content to have angels reaping for us, instead of thinking to rush in with the sickle ourselves, we shall find that our barns shall be filled with plenty, and our labour has not been in vain in the LORD. We must not hope too soon, and then we cannot hope too much.

I was happy to think that our Celebration this morning at half-past seven might be just about the time when your Ordination was taking place. May He Who has called you to bear the Chalice of His Divine Mystery give you grace so to share in

the presentation of His Sacred Passion before the FATHER in your daily life, that you may share according to His purpose the new wine of joy unspeakable in His Eternal Kingdom. God bless you.

Yours affectionately, as a Father in CHRIST,  
R. M. BENSON,  
*Superior.*

II. *To the same.—On his Ordination to the Priesthood.*

S. JOHN'S PARSONAGE,  
VASSALL ROAD,  
S. Thomas, 1871.

I cannot refrain from writing you a few words of greeting although we shall meet tomorrow. May GOD grant you an abundant blessing in the Priesthood, to which He is now calling you. Year by year in the exercise of its powers we can not but feel increasingly our own inadequacy. The work of GOD is altogether beyond us, and we can only give ourselves up to be instruments in His power for whatsoever He may will. Our own growth in priestly offices teaches us this, and the circumstances of our time enforce upon us the same remembrance. The intensifying struggle between the natural cravings and the supernatural guiding of reason, between the Church and the world, between the powers of Light and the powers of Satan, makes

very plain to us in this day the need of an altogether supernatural conception of our holy office. But we must not only know it. We must give ourselves up to it. We must cultivate it, discipline ourselves for it, cherish any natural gift to be an instrument of this supernatural indwelling. To know what we are working for should stimulate us that we may go on preparing ourselves aright. May God of His great mercy so sanctify your life as a Religious, that it may conduce to the perfection of your priestly ministrations ; that the holy anointing may flow out with a blessed fragrance upon all your acts ; that your life, being perfected in CHRIST, may show forth in all things the glory of His mediatorial power. God bless you.

III. *To the same.—On Loyalty to the Church.*

Nov., 1871.

MY DEAR FATHER HALL,

As for being *loyal* to Church of England principles, I hope we always have been ; but it is a phrase which admits of some misconception. It cannot mean being loyal to the exact phraseology for praise or blame of any particular age, as Edward VI, Charles II. There is no reason why we should be loyal to any particular age. Our loyalty is due to *Truth*, and to the great principle of Truth which the Church of England enunci-

ates, i.e. the tradition of the undivided Church, especially the first five centuries. Truth will be differently apprehended, attacked, and maintained in different ages. The same truth will be expressed with a certain variety of phrase, and sometimes the wrong word of one age will become the right word of another, as in the case of hypostasis, usia, homousios. The fourth century was not disloyal to the second or third.

The phrase is an unmeaning one. The Church of England never (thank God) assumed a stereotyped existence, so that we can say 1662 or any other date shows us the true Church of England. The Church of England finds her most loyal defenders in those who believe in her truth as a living body. It is of no use sticking to any particular phraseology as to a Quaker's dress. I am thankful that Convocation was muzzled for so many years. God's providence prevented the Church of England from saying things which we should be ashamed of. But I know of no English Church to which I owe any loyalty distinct from the loyalty which I owe to Truth and the Church Catholic, of which I believe the English Church to be a part.

If I felt Church of England principles to be in any way wrong, I should think I ought to show my loyalty by trying to get them altered. As a matter of fact I do accept our position most heartily, as having been brought about by a special providence and inspiration of Almighty God.

Neither do I acknowledge any loyalty as



due to any particular bishops of the present day, not to Oxford or Canterbury any more than to Rome. I owe canonical obedience to those who are over me, and I would give rather too much obedience than too little.

At the same time we must not confound canonical obedience with monastic or technically Religious obedience. We see this at once in the Society of JESUS, who have a fourth oath of personal obedience to the Pope. This shows what a different thing such obedience as we give to the head of a Religious Order is, to the obedience which is due to an ecclesiastical authority. *The two never ought to clash*, because they have reference to different subject-matter. The Church's rule as enforced by canonical obedience is supreme, so that no Superior of a Religious Society could require it to be transgressed. What we surrender to a Religious Superior is our own *personal* freedom of choice in matters over and above the Church's rule, and a bishop is overstepping his province if he interferes with our personal liberty in matters thus left free.

I think the Church party would have been much more advanced in the present day if there had been more respect shown to the parental authority of the bishops. At the same time we must remember that the bishops have often forfeited all claim to have their judgement respected by trying to enforce their *personal* judgement instead of the judgement of the *Church*, their *ministerial* judgement. The *personal* judgement



of a bishop is really of no more weight than that of any other priest, although one ought always to give it, even when wrong, respectful consideration, so as to obtain a fatherly blessing.

I hope that we as a Society shall always continue to walk in quiet Church of England ways. We must expect great stirring controversies in the world around. I hope we shall always hang together, live in the undivided life of the Sanctifying Spirit. A few years will see great changes. I care very little for the passing of a canon which may be very objectionable. Thank God, it is not *irreformabile nec infallibile*. Where will it be ten years hence? The Protestant Episcopal Church<sup>1</sup> will not die in the interval.

iv. *To the same.*—*On his Election to the See of Vermont, U.S.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Aug. 31, 1893.

May God grant you an abundance of blessing in the work to which you are called. The Feast of S. Aidan may well arouse a glorious sense of missionary enterprise in the heart of an English priest, and, practically, the Diocese of Vermont is a Missionary Station. I suppose you would get the cablegram before Chapel in the morning. I got the news of your election in time to celebrate with a special intention for you at

<sup>1</sup> This is the official title of the American Church.

9.30. I had never thought of the Diocese of Vermont as likely to have for me so much of interest as suddenly transforms a spiritual winter into summer glow.

I see the late bishop presided over it for twenty-five years. I hope you will find the results of his labours remaining for yourself to carry on, and that in the next twenty-five years you may be able to develop much spiritual energy which at present is only in the germ.

As far as I know, my only friend in all the State is the Congregationalist, Dr. Lord, and he has probably passed away from the world since I dropped upon him from the clouds walking into Montpelier in 1870.

With love and blessing,

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.

v. *To Father Page.—Work and its Connection with Spiritual Life.*

RACINE COLLEGE, WIS., U.S.,

March 7, 1871.

MY DEAR FATHER PAGE,

I have just been writing a longish letter to Father Grafton, of which I dare say he will read you some. Certainly it is a great drain upon the Religious Life, our having so much work to do. But we must learn the more fully to rest in God.

He will give us tranquillity, strength, light, and perfection. While we do what He gives us, we may be sure He will not suffer us to need anything that is good. He seems to show us the whole world for which the Blood of Jesus was shed, in order that we may realize the all-embracing power of that Bloodshedding, and may grow to our vocation by the inspiration of its triumphant Life. When so much comes before us, we must not hesitate because we have attained the measure of our own strength, but ask and ask, and He Who gives us the nations for our possession will give us His own strength to take the land into occupation.

Only we must lose ourselves in Him, and find our cloister in His love. Doing all things in His holy Name we must realize that Name as quickening us with inward life, exhaustless, almighty, sheltering us from outward disturbance, and impenetrable to all the anxieties of earthly worry. If we begin our work in Him, we can end it in Him too, and be satisfied even when we see no end of it, if we know that it ends not in earthly consequence, but in His accepting love. If He gave us no more to do than we felt we could do, we should be lifted up. But He shows us a vocation infinitely beyond our power, that we may say to Him with earnest hearts, "LORD, I can do nothing ; but Thou canst do all things. Do with me, do by me, what Thou wilt."

I must try and send you some meditations, or at least "heads." Always be careful to secure your

time for meditation. It will help you in your work, and more will be done in the day in proportion to the energy with which you are able to give yourself to GOD at these times. Try, too, unceasingly to realize the tranquillizing and sustaining power of the various daily offices, and how GOD abundantly gives us grace in proportion to the demands which He knows will be made upon us. We must endeavour to feel that the work to which He calls us is a token of grace which He will not only give, but has given, that so we may the better use that grace for the accomplishment of His work.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*

VI. *To the same.—Preaching.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Rogation Sunday, 1873.*

As to the facility of preaching, I cannot help thinking you lay too much stress upon *matter*, and that you give scarcely sufficient scope to the *affections*. Love does indeed spring out of knowledge (cf. the Procession of the HOLY GHOST from the Wisdom of the FATHER), but love communicates knowledge, and if we are too anxious about the intellectual side of our utter-

ances the very anxiety freezes them. Love makes a very small amount of matter go a long way—like the fragrance of an unseen flower—whereas the richest liquid if it remain in its consistency occupies very little space. People also take in, without knowing it, what comes to them as an atmosphere, whereas it is only under certain circumstances that they are prepared to take in a *lecture*, however excellent its matter may be. They are so much more easily taught through the heart in its wildness than through the head in its regularity. Loving they come to know, whereas our own knowledge in speaking to them goes a very little way.

That is just the reason why preachers are commonly popular in proportion to their having little that is of value in their sermons. People mistake many words for much love, and are glad to be free from the intellectual difficulty of the mere understanding. I believe one of the great secrets of Liddon's popularity with most people is, that his learning and so on is so great, that in his case, as in certain strange mathematical operations,  $\text{infinity} = 0$ . They cannot attempt to understand, and so simple admiration leaves the sound and the vehemence to effect their natural results. "The letter killeth" means this amongst other senses—that too much care for instruction destroys the living power of our words. If we only let people see that we are living upon a Truth, and loving it, they will soon catch the life. But we may often weary ourselves,

without converting them, by logic and erudition. After all it is not words which ever can win people to CHRIST. No man can come to us except the FATHER, Who has sent us, draw him. Live in that Love which the HOLY GHOST is and which He gives, and you will find that He will teach the people. "The unction which ye have received of Him teacheth you all things," and as we look upon our congregations we must feel, "If the HOLY GHOST does not teach you, I cannot."

Do not be anxious about the *length* of your addresses. Often ten minutes will do more than half an hour. In fact I think half an hour is a very bad length. It is long enough to weary, without being long enough to elevate.

Let your preaching come out of a life of prayer, and you need not fear for its result. God has blessed your preaching to many, and He will make it increasingly full of blessing to more.

VII. *To the same.—Bible Teaching to the Heathen.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

1874 ?

With reference to Bible teaching there is a good deal to be said, I think, on both sides. First, there are different ways of teaching it. It may be taught so as to show that the teacher has or has not reverence for it himself. Our LORD'S



discourses even in S. John were not to inquirers, but to cavillers. Probably many are affected by what they learn, although they do not show it until later life ; but I fancy many conversions have been traceable to simply reading the Bible in the school. If it be read merely as any other book it must be harmful, except by some special work of Providence.

I suppose in a mission school there is always the avowal of its sacred estimation. The heathen must see its superiority to their own sacred books, even though the modern pious philosophers of Europe fail to do so.

The portions read ought to be carefully selected. I should think scarcely any of the Epistles ought to be read by the heathen, but the Old Testament, as preparatory, and the Gospels as announcing Christianity—the prophecies and their fulfilments must awaken a sense of the supernatural origin of Christianity which could not otherwise be felt. The Crucifixion is the sin-offering without the camp, for the redemption of mankind. All up to this seems to be common property of the human race in some sort. Their religions have no warrant analogous to Christian prophecy. Their wonders are quite wanting in the moral character of Christian miracles. Their sacrifices and incarnations cannot compare with the divine majesty of the Atonement. Their moral teaching does not satisfy the conscience or elevate the life as do the morals in books of the Old Testament or in discourses of the New.



Their religions do not claim to raise the individual man to a higher order of being in the same way as the mysteries of S. John especially. In fact they do not profess to elevate man at all. These contrasts can scarcely fail to strike a Hindu, even probably much more than ourselves. I do not see why they should not be reverently brought out in a Bible-class of heathen children.

But certainly there ought to be great reserve as to Christian mysteries, both their external form and their internal character. Heathen should not be present at sacramental ordinances. I remember Archdeacon Croghan saying that they had found so much good to result from keeping the natives in the Orange Free State from knowing anything about the Christian worship until they gave themselves up as Catechumens. Their experience was most decided.

VIII. *To the same.—Care of Bodily Health in India  
—Diet and Poverty.*

S. PHILIP'S, CLERKENWELL,

Nov. 5, 1874.

As to diet about which you ask me, I find it very difficult to speak. Probably various persons are very variously affected by the climate, and so they should act somewhat differently.

For us as Religious, I think our law is Poverty,

and Poverty demands taking care of what we have to use, and so in this case taking care of the bodies of our workers. We cannot afford to waste lives. So I must enjoin great economy in this respect under the vow of Poverty. As you would take care of a piano, or any handsome school furniture, or a chasuble, so you must take care of a priest.

At the same time we must take care of the spiritual as well as of the bodily life. Probably a little stimulant is rather helpful in checking the disintegration of the bodily fibres. I believe that is its chief use. Take a little, therefore, without scruple if need be. You have an active life both in body and mind, and therefore you cannot live as a recluse ascetic might do. I do not think you will find the climate less enervating in a few years' time. Some diseases may be less powerful after you are acclimatized, but I fear the steady process of getting rid of one's strength is a continuous feature of life, in a hot country especially. You will see by a little trial what you really can work best upon, and must act according to a true judgement. We must try and live upon as little as possible, but it must be a real trial as to what is possible, not a determination to do what is impossible. And such a trial hinges upon justice, a fair consideration of the things which our strength is wanted for, prudence in wise choice as to what will do the work of sustaining us best at the least cost, temperance not making any trial rashly, and fortitude not doing it timidly. As

I was saying in Chapel at Instruction the other day, we must fast in humility if we cannot fast in substance. It is a humiliating thing to know of what such a man as Mr. Bowen has done, and not to be able to equal it; but our desire must be not to equal him, but to glorify God, and we do that best by acting in submission to the laws of His providence. There are many ways in which we may fast. We should pray that our fast may be to God's glory, and that He will strengthen us for bodily fasting if He wills it. I do not know how far the climate may make greater *frequency* of meals desirable. Possibly the same amount would be more serviceable if taken at intervals. The long time between meals may be more injurious than the smallness of quantity or the kind. A glass of wine and a bit of bread taken half-way might do more than if taken at the meal.

IX. *To the same.—Comparison of Religions.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 22, 1875.*

I shall be quite satisfied either way as to your settling at Mazagon. It is always best to be guided by Divine Providence. You can scarcely act without some *locus*. Of course a parochial district is a tie, but it is also, I fancy, a necessity. You

must take some existing district, or else form a new one. We could not have a house so as simply to be in readiness to go anywhere. We must have *some* work at our house. . . .

I think we should insist much upon the power of Christianity to awaken and satisfy the sense of love. Other religions, even if supposed to be true, have nothing which appeals to the love of the human heart in the way that Christianity does. Whence did this principle of love spring up? If from God, then there must be in God something to satisfy it. And so God is Love. The gods of the heathen are not gods, for they are not love. We can conceive something more joyous for our companionship than they can. It would not be heaven to live for ever with Sudra. Under any circumstances the presence of the God of the Christians constitutes a heaven for those that are with Him. We can conceive nothing more in the way of happiness than to be for ever with Him. "In Thy presence is Life, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." In the delights of a Mohammedan Paradise man sinks rather than rises. In the Life of God man is raised to a higher level than he could attain on earth. Whatever the lives of Christians, untrue to their faith, may be, there is something in the Christian idea of religion—of God, of sin, of moral duty, of self-sacrifice, of love, of eternal hope, of the life of righteousness—which is elevating in a way such as no other religion can equal. One cannot believe that

a lie should have a power of moral elevation greater than the truth.

Christianity does not solve the difficulties which exist in Theism, but it goes a long way *towards* solving many of them, and gives us reasons why we cannot have others solved in our present condition. Without the idea of God how entirely the idea of self-respect vanishes from the human mind. Self-respect, without appeal to the divine judgement as that on which we rely for approval, would be mere pride—the most contemptible of all things. But then again, without the idea of the Mediator as exhibited in Christianity, the idea of God is crushing. We cannot respect ourselves before God except as being sanctified and raised to a higher life in CHRIST JESUS. The natural life never can merit the divine approval. The Hindu sees that, and consequently makes happiness consist in getting rid of it. He becomes happy in the same moment in which he becomes personally unconscious. Christianity retains personality as our eternal condition, but we rise into a new life by regeneration—such a life as God can rejoice in, for it is derived from Himself. In this life we can love God and respect ourselves, and rise to a higher supernatural self-respect by the very fact of humbling ourselves before the revealed Presence of God.

Max Müller divides religions by various differentia which he shows to be altogether valueless, and so he lets Christianity quietly down to the



level of other religions. He omits one differentiating principle. Christianity is the only religion which professes to regenerate mankind, the only religion which professes to give to man the Life of God. Hinduism professes to find the Life of God in man—but man sinks lower and lower. The Life of God has ceased to profit. Christianity finds man in a state of acknowledged death and offers the gift of Life. No other religion makes the same offer. Could any religion make the offer, or think of making it, if it had not the power of effecting it? The bad lives of Christians are nothing against it because the *standard* of Christianity is so *high* that it is not conceivable that any save a very few of those who profess it should live up to it. Hindus may observe national customs and live up to their religion. If they live eminent lives they go *beyond* their religion. Christians must live up to the Life of God if they would be true to their religion, and, do what they may, they *cannot* go beyond it. Nay, they cannot reach that exhibition of it which their Founder has given them. Other religions make life more burdensome. Christianity as a living power makes the greatest sorrow supportable. Christians may well be worse than other men—according to the maxim : *Corruptio optimi pessima*. The goodness of a Hindu may result from some philosophic thought personal to himself, but *not* from his *religion*. The badness of a Christian arises from his neglect of his religion, while the goodness of

the very worst, as well as the saintliness of the best, springs out of the reality and power of the truth which they profess.

x. *To the same.*—*Miracles as Evidence of Christianity.*

*Undated, probably 1875.*

The great miracle must be the Risen Life. If we can set forth an actual Easter of divine grace before the people, they will be moved by it, if they are of the truth. The miracle must be in our own selves and in them. God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham, but no outward miracle will effect the conversion of a human soul. We shall not be changed from stones to children by seeing stones changed before our eyes into bread. Yet if God does make us His children He takes us up into the fellowship of supernatural life, that we may no longer live by bread alone, but may seek our meat from our FATHER which is in heaven. There cannot be a true outburst of spiritual life without such divine interposition, any more than there can be an outburst of buds in spring without the green manifestation of the tender leaf. Such interpositions must make a Christian community felt as a supernatural power. I expect that tales of miracles invented in later times are often just the sediment which this widespread, but vague, consciousness of supernatural power leaves



behind. If we are God's children it ought to be felt that we have powers different from the mere children of the world. The powers of the world to come are not a mere sentiment, but a real constituent element of our being. But the natural heart wants to reduce these powers to certain visible measures of earthly action. It must, however, be the heavenly character of the Christian life which touches the heart and draws men out of darkness to God. The Gospels are the true evidences of Christianity. No man ever spoke like this Man, Whose whole Life was a changeless Word of power and loveliness, revealing God as He was not known before. We must seek to be so conformed to CHRIST that we may indeed speak His Word and live His Life as the HOLY GHOST teacheth.

XI. *To the same.—The Convert's Difficulties the Test of his Sincerity and the Instrument of his Sanctification.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 28, 1876.

It is quite well that——<sup>1</sup> I should have some difficulties in the way of joining us. I would not ease the way for him very much. It is a good thing for a man to be obliged to face overwhelming difficulty. I expect the Hindus need

<sup>1</sup> A Hindu convert.

this especially. I would do as little as possible to alleviate their difficulty. Their patience and endurance even unto death will develop strength in them, and make them real converting instruments of God's glory. If they have a real call to higher life in any way, God is sure to make the way open for their attaining to the end which He desires. It may be that He will call some into the Religious Life by means of outward difficulty, but then they must accept it as a very real life of poverty and suffering. This very week I have had to do with a young draper, who says he cannot continue in his trade conscientiously, come what may. Of course, what he feels others ought to feel. What to do with such persons one does not know. But no doubt it was similar difficulties which drove multitudes out of the heathen world in early times into the wilderness, and in like manner society may be revolutionized now, new forms of life may unexpectedly grow up. This would seem to be a necessity in India, where caste reigns so supremely. For converts the mere necessity of making their living must revolutionize society there. And it is the struggle of doing this which will make their life a really strong and healthy Christian life. I would therefore make all converts feel that they must go through a very stern discipline before they can look to be helped by us to any worldly maintenance. The Church can only live by confessors. As I walk through our streets of shops, I feel that we need to have

martyrs to honesty quite as much as ever or anywhere there was need of martyrs to faith. . . .

XII. *To the same.*—*On Living among the Heathen.*

DITCHINGHAM,

Sept. 5, 1876.

I am very glad you have had so pleasant a visit to Allahabad and Indore. I am sure that Father O'Neill was quite right in settling among the people and being as much as possible at home with them. He "dwelt among us." So must the Word ever do. As we dwell in any place it is JESUS Who comes near to those people, and His presence will be effectual—not, perhaps, for the many, but for those whom the FATHER has given Him. I have not much faith in fussy processes of proselytism, but there will be a gentle power of grace working round about us if we are living true to it. He "dwelt among us," even the Son of Man, Who is in heaven. So must we have a double home, with man and in GOD. Then will our work assuredly accomplish God's will.

XIII. *To the same.*—*Joy in the Lord.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Oct. 20, 1876?

I do indeed hope that GOD will strengthen you for your difficulty. We will make it a

matter of special prayer during Advent, in what form I have not yet determined. Do not let yourself regard this trouble as invincible. Rise up in the fulness of divine confidence to meet it with joy. We must try and live in the continual consciousness of heavenly joy. We have not got to triumph for CHRIST, but He triumphs in us. We find the power of His triumph just in proportion as we live in the joy of it. We must think of ourselves as being already in heaven. It seems to me that the power of our LORD's glorified Body may be somewhat illustrated by the power of animal magnetism, whereby one body exercises such an influence over another that the other body no longer lives by its own sensations, but is simply subject to the sensations of the controlling will. What a person tastes when in this state of thralldom is supposed to be bitter or sweet, just as the will of the agent dictates. The person goes in any direction, does any act, no longer as being himself, but in simple subservience to the irresistible will which rules him. Is it not just thus that we ought to judge of everything, feel everything, accept everything, long for everything, simply in subjection to the will, the mind, of CHRIST? Then we should feel His joy in His glory raising us out of the misery of this present life and its temptations. We should think and speak and act as His members. In fact, is not that mesmeric law the natural counterpart of that through which grace operates? Our bodies are formed to live thus under the influence

of other bodies. Is not this in order that we may be under the influence of the Body of CHRIST? We might thus truly taste the powers of the world to come, even while living in the flesh, and find the power of CHRIST's glorified Life in our humanity, holding down the impulses of our own flesh in subjection to Himself. This is that death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness which is our baptismal gift. We have not got to conquer an enemy in our own strength, but to die to our own will, our own thoughts, our own impulses, by losing ourselves in CHRIST glorified. The life which we live in the flesh should thus be by the faith of the SON of GOD.

Thus we must give ourselves up to contemplate the Body of CHRIST, that so we may be absorbed out of our own life into His. So the obedience of faith differs in kind from the obedience of the law. It accepts a unification of consciousness, and gives itself up to CHRIST to know no other life but what is moved by Him. If we lived thus more outside of ourselves in the contemplation of Him, we should find Him working more truly in us according to His supernatural power. It is so difficult for us to realize this absorption into Him as being not the *end*, but the *beginning*, of holiness. A person needs to do nothing in order to fit himself for becoming subject to the will of another mesmerically. It is the relationship constituted between the two which occasions those phenomena.



So it is no worthiness of our own that prepares us to correspond with the grace of CHRIST. It is the simple surrender of ourselves that is wanted, just as we are, to become transformed by being brought under the influence of His holiness.

But our death unto self must not be a mere negation. We must rise to experience the joy wherewith He is glorified, and He will teach us increasingly of this joy. The unction which teacheth us is the oil of gladness wherewith He is anointed, and we cannot have the teaching without the rejoicing. "Rejoice in the LORD always." By a real living sympathy with Him in the joy of His Holy Kingdom we acquire the holiness which belongs to His people. We must not merely *hope* for it. That is only a kind of enlightened Judaism. We must *live* in it. We do not believe in the Church which is to be holy, but as being holy now. And yet there are great sins hiding the holiness of the Church. So we are to realize the present sanctity of our own life in CHRIST, and not merely hope to be holy when our natural sinfulness has passed away.

How wonderfully should we be changed by divine grace if we did thus exercise the power of faith! May God enable us all to show forth His transforming power increasingly.

XIV. *To the same.*—*Suggestion of a Periodical Mission Paper for Mazagon discussed.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Feast of the Holy Innocents, 1876.*

. . . . .

With reference to a magazine or newspaper, I should think it would be quite worth while organizing it, if it is carefully edited. It ought to be thoroughly Catholic in its basis, with as little profession of Catholicity as possible. Whatever is said should be always true to the fundamental principles of the Church ; and matters that can only be treated in a sectional spirit should be as much as possible avoided. They cannot be altogether left out, but the less said about them the better. Bombay is not now in advance of what was popular in England when the *Tracts for the Times* began to come out. In some respects probably there is much more backwardness there than there was in England *then*. There is not the steady old traditional Churchmanship which, however somnolent, was nevertheless a powerful element of Church life in England, only needing to be aroused. Evidential papers, especially arguments from prophecy, would be very useful. The simplest elements of Church truth would need to be taught, developed out of Holy Scripture, and defended from misrepresentation, after the manner of the "Richard



Nelson" tracts, which I think Keble wrote. It would be important to avoid slashing and satirical writing. There should be great reticence, but no compromise. Many things that one might say fearlessly as a preacher should be avoided in writing anonymously, and in the unhallowed atmosphere of a newspaper office. You must consider whether you have time to undertake the editing. I should quite rejoice in it if it could be kept going. . . .

xv. *To the same.—Attitude of Religious towards Ecclesiastical Authorities.*

1882 ?

. . . — must remember to keep his own judgement under control.

It is unfortunate that there should ever seem to be any misunderstanding between him and the bishop.

If the bishop says or does anything it is not for us to express to him our approval—much less our disapproval. If we do not remember what is due to authority we cannot expect to receive the blessing which authority transmits. Rather we must blame ourselves, and let ourselves be blamed, than censure by word or letter those who rule over us in the LORD.

Even when we see unwisdom in any command, we are generally wisest in obeying silently. If our judgement is asked or needed we can give it

when it is necessary. Then our advice will be all the more telling. As Religious we ought to be the more humble, not putting ourselves forward. Those things always turn out most for God's glory which come to us least sought. Any individual subject's habit of failing to act obediently under criticism is a most embarrassing thing to any one in authority. We cannot look for God's blessing if any sense of human capacity, well-grounded or no, gets to override our sense of what is due to Him alone, and the reticence proper towards the acts of one whom we ought simply to obey. If *Religious* are to criticize, what is *the world* to do? If the Religious has not learnt to be silent, how will he attain the salvation promised to the lowly? The bishop ought to feel that he can act towards us with a hearty confidence in our simple co-operation. . . .

xvi. *To the same.*—*On Travelling Second Class P. & O.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 2, 1884.

. . . . .  
You ask about P. & O. I certainly think we ought to be true to the law of poverty as far as possible. I do not know the conditions of the Indian steamers, but I think we ought to go by second class P. & O., or first class on one of the

cheaper lines, preferably to mixing with the ordinary first class P. & O. passengers. We have come out of the world, and we must not let ourselves be drawn back into it by a foolish idea of exerting influence. We must seek to influence, not the world by mixing with it, but God by prayer and mortification.

I cannot fancy any one of the old prophets going first class in one of those ships. Instead of feeling that I am likely to influence people on board of an Atlantic liner by mixing with them, I have always felt quite the reverse—that they saw one with his locks shorn,<sup>1</sup> and that one could only influence them by keeping out of their way. But plainly we have not to live for influence, we have to carry out our dedication. That is our vow, and we shall be amply rewarded for any lack of influence it may involve.

There is great danger of our getting to play at being Religious. Nowadays there are so many reasons—health, usefulness, family claims, etc., etc.—which drag us back into the world from which we have tried to escape. I often feel as if we must go to some island in the Atlantic or the Pacific, so as to be able to carry out our lives undisturbed. Missionary considerations ought to be kept subordinate to the three vows. Otherwise our whole life becomes worthless. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Reference, perhaps, to Samson in his weakness with locks shorn.

XVII. *To the same.—A Whitsuntide Letter.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 22, 1885.

May the fulness of Pentecostal blessing rest upon the Society throughout the world. However scattered, we are all one in the power of the HOLY GHOST. That which is given to any one of us is given to all, shared by all, that so God may be glorified in all. What a joy there is in this unity of the Society, the Communion of Saints, whereby we are able to claim for ourselves all that God has done in and for any others—the saints of all past ages, our brethren now in the flesh, the members of our own Community wherever they may be. The Life of CHRIST as manifested in each and all is a common possession, which we are not only to regard as an encouragement that we may do what others have done, but rather we must claim it as being actually our own. All that is CHRIST's is ours. As He, the Head, rejoices in that which He works by His Spirit in any of His members, so we must rejoice in it all just as much as if it be in ourselves. The Headship from which the Life comes, the Life which binds us to that Headship, is an indissoluble consciousness of mutual joy. We can have nothing if we would individualize it. We have all things if we lose ourselves in Him. And then if it seems impossible for us to grasp the

greatness of the heavenly gift vouchsafed in the Body of CHRIST, we yet rejoice the more. It is not for us to grasp it, but for us to know that it grasps us. We cannot hold on to GOD save by being held up by GOD. The Spirit which is given to us is not the power of the Spirit, but the Spirit of power. GOD does not give any abstract quality of His Being, so that we may use it to the best of our ability, but He gives us the personal Presence of the HOLY GHOST, that He may use us in our weakness for the accomplishment of all His glorious purposes. This simple repose of the soul in GOD is the truest activity. "Stablish me with Thy free Spirit. Lead me in the way everlasting. Guide me into Truth." Not into any fresh truth, but into the inmost power of that truth which I have known all along; that so the knowledge of the intellect may be transformed into the experimental knowledge which makes truth to be really saving truth, sanctifying truth, deifying truth. GOD must teach us by His HOLY SPIRIT, and, as He makes Himself manifest within us, we know Him truly by knowing ourselves to be in Him; knowing our own nothingness save by that substantial reality of existence which belongs to us as partaking of His SON; loving Him because loved by Him in the unity of the HOLY GHOST.

XVIII. *To the same.—An Ascensiontide Letter.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Ascension Day, 1887.*

This bright Festival brings the whole globe before our minds as a mere point of space, lit by an undivided ray of light from the countenance of Him Who sits enthroned upon the infinite glory of creative power. The globe thus dwarfed makes us feel how near we are to one another, although separated by a large part of its diameter ; and the ray of light thus undivided as it strikes upon the globe makes us learn how truly we are united in the life-giving power of divine grace.

It is strange how a system of Christianity could ever grow up which should take so little account of our LORD'S Ascension as the Christianity ever since Constantine has done. It is not wonderful that a Christianity having so little grasp of our relation to the throne of JESUS should be a feeble one, and should be driven to the many make-shifts by which, according to their tone of mind, Roman or Protestant, the great bulk of modern Christians have sought to find some substitute near at hand for the sovereign and life-giving glory of JESUS at the right hand of GOD. Christian missions must fail, or if they seem to succeed only turn out the greater failures, unless we do indeed recognize the power of this great kingdom



founded upon the throne of God, not in any sense temporal or earthly, but gathered out of earth as the kingdom of eternal life. This Festival ought to make us pray more earnestly, "Thy kingdom come."

XIX. *To the same.—Sincere but Imperfect Apprehension of Christianity.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Dec. 29, 1887.

The old year almost gone! The new year begins with Sunday. May it indeed be the acceptable year of the LORD, a year of resurrection, a year of revelation, a year of spiritual energy.

I have just been reading Ramabai's book. It is very interesting. In the transition of a vast intellectual population like that of India to Christianity we must be prepared for many to occupy intermediate positions. I do not know how much of the Faith she has really grasped, but it is not wonderful that she should come but a little way. How very imperfect the faith of many in our LORD's Divinity must have been before the Council of Nice; yet it does not follow that they themselves missed the blessings of the Faith—and they were preparing the way for the truth to shine out in all its fulness. So there must be various degrees of cloudy apprehension in India



before we can expect to see a cloudless noonday sunshine.

xx. *To the same.—An Easter Letter.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 6, 1888.*

Easter is shining upon us with all its glorious power. May we all of us have grace to realize its brightness. That brightness no earthly sorrows can cloud, and, what is more, earthly sorrows are the very conditions of life by which alone that brightness can shine out. I am afraid we are too apt to long for death as an escape from earthly sorrows, instead of realizing how valuable life is just for the very purpose of suffering, because every sorrow of this present life is a fresh means of working out that glory which will be revealed hereafter. We should desire to depart and to be *with Christ*, but not to depart so as to *lose the Cross*. I feel myself very much to blame in this respect. It is difficult to value life, not for its successes, but for its failures; and yet God is glorified not by what He gives us here to enjoy, but by the glory in which He will gather us unto Himself when we have suffered. We must not be in a hurry. Wait the full time. Not until we can say, "It is finished, there is nothing more to suffer"—not until then can we commend our spirits into the hands of the Eternal FATHER

as the members of the Crucified. We must learn to welcome every sorrow with the LORD's words : " Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

XXI. *To the same.*—*A Voyage to India.*

GETTING TOWARDS BOMBAY,

Nov. 22, 1890.

MY DEAR FATHER SUPERIOR,<sup>1</sup>

There are a very considerable number of nice people on board. One table is entirely occupied by missionaries. My own table is chiefly military. Our Bible-class of which I spoke has incorporated some additional members. There have been constant athletics and concerts, but they have not disturbed my routine of life, nor has the betting on the day's run. I believe the obstacle race was a very good one yesterday. After all, those exhibitions of white people do not come up to the dark figures in the water which call out for a penny dive. It is difficult to conceive that those urchins, who seem to be simply made to live in the water, can have been made to live on earth as their probation, and in heaven as their reward, just like ourselves. But so it is. One must realize how truly they have been redeemed by the Blood of CHRIST, just

<sup>1</sup> Father Page became Superior-General in 1890.

like ourselves—and they have not rejected the claims of that precious Blood so much as many of the white grandees that look contemptuously upon them. After all, life is not very much worth living after the fashion of those white grandees; but one hopes that some of them will come in due time to a knowledge of what makes life really worth having. The people on board generally get to bed in very fair time, and I have enjoyed the deck very much when I have had it to myself.

XXII. *To the same.—The Taj at Agra.*

LUCKNOW,

*Feb. 15, 1891.*

Friday I spent at Agra, arriving there at six a.m. from Delhi. I spent some time in the Fort, which is most interesting. The Mahrattas, who looted the Peacock Throne at Delhi, had possession of it for fifteen years, and were at length driven out by the English under Lord Lake in 1803. The marks of the cannon-balls still show themselves in many places; but here as elsewhere the Indian Government are doing their utmost to restore and preserve whatever is valuable as a work of art. The Pearl Mosque is beautiful.

I walked to the Taj. It has been called a dream in marble. Indeed, it was once one of the dreams

of one's life to see it. Sometimes dreams are realized more easily than realities. Certainly, if it is a dream, it is a dream which few souls could have had genius enough to develop even in a dream! Perfectly marvellous! A painter's brush may produce a dream which the sight of it awakens, but itself is altogether as incapable of representation as the sunlight. Nature works along with art. The beautiful blue sky, the dark foliage of cypresses and tropical plants in the surrounding gardens, the waters in the long basins and channels, some of white marble and others of red sandstone, reflecting the central object, seem as an orchestra carefully trained to emphasize a voice of witchery whose melodious sadness holds the listener hushed. Its effect is greatly enhanced by the buildings of red sandstone, with white marble inlaid, through which it is seen at various distances on either side, and with which, as you stand in the gardens, your eye contrasts it when for a moment you turn away. As you enter you see it framed by the dark red archway, with nature's massive greenery and bright aerial blue. It stands before you in its delicate purity, with many a line of inlaid colour, faint enough to destroy the harsh solidity of absolute whiteness, without letting it lose its pure lustre. It seems as if it were like thistledown that could be blown away, but there it stands unchangeably the same. It appeals to the eye somewhat as a range of Alpine snows seen far away amongst the clouds. The mountain-

peaks are far away, and far on high. They lift the soul far upward. This—! One asks, What is it for? It has no lesson of uplifting joyous hope. It only enshrines despair. It only tells of the tyranny of death. A monarch may bury his dead out of his sight, but he can only make the power of death more manifest by the tricking out which he summons. The wealth that he expends is the very measure of his feebleness.

I rested for some time in the garden, and wrote some notes on the Psalms as I sat beside the marble basin. How different is death, with all the resources of wealthy woe, from the bright hope which rests upon many a simple grave of turf, when Christian love can follow the dead into another world with bright anticipations of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The interior of the building brings out still more the futility of pride beneath the penalty of sin. The chief decorations of costly mosaic are inside, but one can only see them by the help of the taper with which the Chuprassy conducts the visitor to inspect the various details. These are the tombs of Shah Jahan and of her whom he professed to deplore, "the Light of the World," "the Exalted of the Palace." She died in 1629. The building was finished in 1640. He is now buried beside her. It is the splendour of death veiling the hopelessness of the dead. Each jewelled flower in the mosaic seems to call up a voice from below—"See what we had, but we have nothing now!"

How different are the memorials which Christian faith teaches us to raise, that they who are gone to God's love may exert a power of love in which they may still in some sort live upon the earth. Keble College or the Sarah Acland Institution tell of aims and powers which death could not thwart nor quench. Islam in India seems to revel in exhibiting death in its supremacy by the incapacity of the proud fatalism which bows down to it. Let us hope that Christian wealth may exhibit the triumph of life over death, and light up those vast populations which are now wasting their lives with little sense of joy or desire for better things, so that life may rise to a joyous energy of which they are incapable without the stimulus of faith, and the grave may shine with sweet visions of a home on high, wherein true hope exults to recognize the exhaustless resources of eternal love.

I went into the Mosque which is near the Tomb, itself one of the beautiful buildings where red arches relieve the framework of the landscape. From beneath their shade one gets another beautiful aspect of the building. Being quite by myself I was able to sing the office for None ; it was a pleasure to make the arches resound with a *Gloria Patri*, as one stood where the Moulvie used to read the Koran. I dare say others have said the *Gloria* there before me, but one hopes that that glory will be hastened by many prayers, and Ishmael be called back to the tent of Isaac.



XXIII. *To the same.—The Taj Revisited.*

[Father Benson paid a second visit to the Taj in June of this same year, and wrote a further account of it.]

AGRA,

June 22, 1891.

I spent some hours of last night in the garden of the Taj. It was not a Jewish new moon nor a Mohammedan crescent which lit up the darkness. It was a bright Christian full moon, reminding one that India has its share in the promises attaching to the third day after the great Paschal moon which lit up Gethsemane. I found I could squeeze this visit into my journey without losing a day, so I determined to break my journey here on the way to Lucknow. Father Biscoe will know why I want to go there. I arrived about three o'clock, and drove straight to the Taj. It was well worth the visit. The intense stillness of nature, very different from the genial repose of practical energy as delineated in Gray's *Elegy*, but rather transformed into the magic of oriental mystery. An occasional splash of water told of some fish moving in the marble basins. Once or twice a railway whistle in the distance seemed to recall the nineteenth century as a thing far, far away. One could not help feeling that no one else in all the world was spending the night in such a chamber of loveliness as that garden. Then the moon went gradually down, and another light from the East began to overspread everything.



Nature woke up. It was getting on for five o'clock. The pale grey of the sky began to assume a deeper blue, and all around the song of birds filled heaven with a call of *Benedicite*. Some birds swept past—I think they were vultures. Their dark forms marked the sky, and the waters reflected them. The squirrels began to run across the pathways. The dark trees began to glow with various intensities of green. The dream-like structure, which seemed ready to melt into the grey moonlight atmosphere, stood out amidst the renewed brightness with all the wonderful reality of daylight. Nature was awake. In less than a quarter of an hour all was changed. There was a coolie, a gardener, sleeping on the bench beside me. He bathed in the tank, went to the western side, spread his mat upon the pavement, lifted up his hands towards Mecca, knelt down, and said his prayers. Another coolie came in like manner and prayed at the other western corner of the marble enclosure. One longed that they might pray as Christians, and that European Christians should pray with the simple earnestness and reverence of their prayers, however little these men may have known of God, whom they worshipped before going to their work. One could not but contrast the two religions. How worthless Islam must be, which, with such devotion in its people, effects nothing but misery as its consequence for mankind! How truly divine Christianity must be, which, in spite of the negligence and indevotion of Christians, has

achieved such wonderful results for the manifestation of divine love in the elevation of humanity!

I am so glad that Bishop French was engaged in a translation of S. Hilary *de Trinitate* into Arabic when he died. His death was quite such a death as was fitted to close his life. This place shines with his memory, as he identified himself with the Christian converts here at the time of the Mutiny, and would not enter the Fort until they were allowed to enter along with him.

XXIV. *To the same.—On the Prospect of a Priest  
Seceding from the Church.*

BOSTON, U.S.,  
*April 26, 1892.*

. . . Thinning the trees makes great gaps, but in fact the plantation grows all the stronger. Do not, therefore, be discouraged whatever the result may be. But I do trust that by God's grace such a terrible evil may be averted. The loss of those we love—in any way but death—is a terrible dig into our hearts. Yet even there God makes a void in order that He Himself may fill it, and we must learn to live satisfied, as Adam our forefather ought to have done, with the presence of God, even though we see Eve separated from us by any fall into sin. We must take care that the earthly affection and wound do not disturb the tranquillity with which we abide alone in God.

xxv. *To the same.—Importance of Christian Institutions in the Conversion of India.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Vigil of S. Philip and S. James, 1903.*

I am glad that you have had such a delightful tour in India. You will go about England and waken a missionary spirit where all was dead. England must be the sphere of your peregrinations: we want enkindling. You speak of S. Paul's spirit, as if it would have been stirred by the idolatry of India. Surely he would have been much more provoked by the manifold abominations of London and Paris! The poor Hindu does not profess the faith of CHRIST. We make that faith to be blasphemed. Indeed we cannot let you stay in India. . . .

I do think that we ought to be more aggressive, but I do not for a moment imagine that the natives regard us as really in our hearts tolerating their superstitions. I am afraid their idea rather is that we look upon them with contempt. However dense their superstitions may be, they have an idea of our religion as belonging to a higher plane of divine life. Their divine life is a slavish condition to which they were born. Our divine life is a spiritual energy looking forward to a higher development in another world. They might be horrified at the idea of losing their caste. They

know that we claim a higher covenant with God—faith, hope, and love. What really *shocks* them is the life of the English which they see in India. It shocks them, because they do feel the superior claim which religion and morality have for us, while they themselves are in this respect only like the brute beasts. They are shocked at our novels, which they get from soldiers in the barracks, whereas their own highest literature, in which they are trained from their teens, is infinitely more obscene. The real difficulty of aggressiveness is the linguistic one.

I suppose S. Paul was moved rather by seeing the unsatisfied piety which would build an altar to an unknown God, seeking to rise above the idolatry around, than by the degradation of the surrounding mythology. “Ye are somewhat religious” seems to be the truer interpretation of his words—“ye ought to have something better.” The mention of his being stirred in spirit rather implies that, generally speaking, he left them alone. If he had not time to train, he did not seek to disturb them by impassioned outbursts.

So, I think, with us. We have to set forth Christianity in its corporate life by institutions such as we have at Poona. The Divine Life will make its presence felt as *a city that is set on an hill*. One admires such a holy self-devotion as Mr. Bowen’s, but it is not likely to tell upon the natives around. All to whom the Apostles spoke in the Acts were thoroughly well prepared by Judaism, whether

Jews or Gentiles, to receive what the Apostles had to say.

Schools, Christian and efficient, really educating the whole child, are what we want in order to train up a people prepared for the LORD. A martyr must know the value of that for which he gives up his comfort and life in this world. The ordinary Hindu cannot realize this. He has to learn the greatness of his own soul, created for personal communion with a personal God. Of this he is absolutely unconscious. He can only learn it slowly.

I have no doubt that within twenty-five years the religious state of India will be quite different from anything we can conceive. I should be very sorry if India were rapidly Christianized after the pattern of Europe. They had much better be in their Hindu ignorance than have the nominal acceptance of some Christian phraseology while their hearts are far from God. One advantage of the providential arrangement which isolates schools under Christian care from the adult kindred to which the children belong is just this, that one may hope for them to leave school with a high and real sense of their Christian Faith ; whereas the children in an English school go forth, and can seldom carry with them any real, pious, elevating sense of their religion ; for it is drowned in the multitude of children round about them who have it not.

It is by careful schools and institutions that we must build up the Church in India, and *they* will



preach to the wide area of heathendom. They are doing this already. The Hindu and Moham-medan newspapers acknowledge the superiority of training by which the lower castes are getting ahead of the Brahmans. I always used to tell Father Goreh that it was the lower caste people who must convert India. This is God's rule. It was so in Galilee. It is so still. Multitudinous conversions, such as those of Clovis and his army, served a purpose under the providential arrangements of those days. Our position in India is quite different. Even then the more powerful tribes, becoming Arian, passed away, and the inferior tribes have left their name upon the map of Europe. Individuals, like Father Goreh, have a great work to do which does not perish with their lives ; but a thousand well-trained and thoroughly Christianized persons of low caste will probably have a greater effect than a thousand Brahmans, if one could conceive of them as being suddenly converted to CHRIST.

There is indeed a difficulty at the very outset in the sense of superiority which a Brahman will be likely to retain, even though he seeks to abjure it.

I have no doubt that God is preparing the way for Christian homes in India which will be developed out of our present schools.

. . . . .



xxvi. *To the same.—An Ethnological question.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

July 21, 1893.

I returned in time for the Sunday services after spending more than a fortnight in Canada. At Montreal I stepped in to have my cloak mended at a tailor's, as it had sustained some damage in the cars. While the man was at work I was talking with the boss, a German. We got upon "Home Rule." "Oh," said he, "the Irish always must be a rebellious people. No one could ever manage them. The Bible says so." It was quite news to me to have Home Rule settled in this way by Scripture! I began thinking what could be meant, and I suppose my face implied some hesitation. "Why," said he, "you know they were turned out because no one could manage them. You know the Irish are the Canaanites!"

xxvii. *To the same.—A Visit to Nassau, Bahamas.*

NASSAU,

Oct. 30, 1893.

I arrived here this morning in a drenching rain, very unlike the usual bright sunshine of this charming little island. When I was here twenty-two years ago the whole scene was brilliant with every colour the sunshine, foliage, fruit, and animal

life could give. I hope we shall have a return to the normal state of clear blue sky before my fortnight here expires. However, I had a bright welcome on the pier from the Bishop and Weigall, who were kind enough to come and greet me, although I think there was no one else whose friends here braved the monsoon. I consoled them at breakfast by telling them what the monsoon is like in Bombay, and the special attention which both monsoon and white ants show to literature. I suppose this heavy rain may be the result of the disturbances caused by the three hurricanes which there have been recently. They, however, did not affect these islands immediately, their line of march was more confined to the seaboard of the continent. The poor negroes on some of the islands of the Carolinas are in a hopeless state of starvation until next year, entirely dependent upon what may be sent to them.

I had two or three days in New York, in which I read the first volume of Dr. Pusey's Life. I think the book would have been better without the illustrations. They are not up to the mark, and the portraits give very little idea of his outward appearance. The picture of him preaching his University Sermon gives one much more the idea of a young polemical orator, confident in his own powers, than of a man coming forth from ascetic retirement, bearing the traces of mental and bodily austerity, with a face marred beyond his years by self-discipline and external opposition and manifold anxiety, and speaking in the calm power of the

HOLY GHOST, not as the head of a party, but as the somewhat saddened but irrepressible instrument of the Divine Will. I hope to read Vol. II on my return visit to Dr. Houghton a fortnight hence.

XXVIII. *To the same.—Retreats—Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Christianity.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

*Feast of S. Thomas, 1893.*

I suppose this will reach you on New Year's Day, and find you all in Retreat. GOD grant you and all the Society much blessing with the new year. I am glad to think that it is likely to be followed by two professions. Father Gardner, in a letter the other day, was rejoicing at the prospect of increased strength to the work at Bombay. One learns increasingly to find how important every individual unit is in the work of CHRIST. How much He makes to depend upon each one, as each individual maintains the integrity of the whole work, and how much He can do by each one, if true to Him in his own position. So the Church grows, not only by individual energy, but by collective effort, the work of love enabling each to take the divinely-appointed part in the Communion of Saints. The annual Retreats ought to send us forth with a deepening sense of unity as well as of intensity, and the power of the HOLY GHOST effects both of these. The years, as they go by, make the heart long for the great consum-

mation, the acceptable year of the LORD, and trust in its brightness, that we may all come to the unity of glory which faith at present so feebly apprehends; but in that day we shall find how wonderfully the unseen Hand has apprehended us, and held us up when we were ready to fall. Then in the great day of the LORD we shall see in perfection what as yet we so imperfectly realize.

I was glad to hear of Father Congreve's arrival at Ceylon.

There is one thing we may learn from Buddhism, and that is the reality of Christianity. It is only by knowing the dreaminess of Buddhism with its nothingness, and Brahmanism with its *Maya*, making everything vanish in delusion, that we get to appreciate the danger of delusion and dreaminess in our own theology. The Blessed Trinity is not an idea, but a Substance, one Substance, Power and Eternity. It is because our notions are so saturated with unreality that people are so ready to take up with what sounds fairly and finely, without detecting how unreal it is. Poor —— ! How strange it is to conceive of a powerful intellect waking up in an instant to feel the nothingness of the physical world, and of man as belonging to it, and the glory of the Eternal Truth, which needed only childlike faith for its apprehension, but which reason could never reach ! God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty ! We shall see by and by how God has perfected praise out of the mouths of infants, when we see the Blessed

City, whose gates are Praise, the pure pearls of childlike hearts, re-born unto GOD in the waters of grace.

There is a Japanese lecturing now in Staten Island, and a lot of people thinking him wonderful! The fact is, what is most unreal is most easily assimilated by the human mind. Truth always requires some effort to grasp, as well as some preparation of heart to appreciate. Truth always requires subsequent action. It can never be known in the height or in the depth as a mere contemplation. It must be known interiorly, so that man may do it, act true to it.

XXIX. *To the same.*—Dr. Heurtley—Balfour's  
“*Foundations of Belief.*”

BOSTON, U.S.,

*Vigil of the Feast of the Purification, 1895.*

I hear that Dr. Heurtley has passed away at last. His decline has been so gradual, like the sunlight ceasing to touch the upper mountain-slopes and just resting on the summit until darkness covers all, that one can only look up with affectionate regret and feel that the last ray of evening finds us so much nearer the first of the coming morn. One wonders who will succeed him! Certainly no one like himself, for indeed he remained very much alone as the representative of a type of devotion that belonged to a departed generation. Lord Selborne also gone! What a terrible loss he is! One of the most



cheering considerations, however, is in the thought that we have numbered among our statesmen four men with such a grasp of Christian Faith as Salisbury, Selborne, Balfour, and Gladstone.

Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* is a very interesting book. The retort upon the men of science, of the uncertainty which belongs to our sense-perceptions as much as to any mysteries of faith, is very ably done. Indeed, it is strange that people do not see that certainty is a faculty belonging to an Infinite Mind, and, therefore, in the very nature of things, unattainable upon any subject by us as finite creatures. We can know nothing certainly unless we know everything absolutely. What we require for certitude is not merely authenticated information, but infinite apprehension. Meanwhile it is for us to tarry in patience and prayer until He shall come, Who is Himself the Faith—the Infinite Mind from which all creation has its origin, and in Whose fellowship we shall at length attain to know as we are known.

xxx. *To the same.—An Old Coloured Woman.*

May 6, 1895.

One of my old ladies in the Coloured Home kept her birthday this week. All Boston was invited. I do not know whether it was to wish her many happy returns of it. She was 103.



Perhaps she has been able to live thus long, and be still quite well, because she never wasted time in learning to read or to write, and therefore has escaped the worries which these accomplishments bring to most people in this nineteenth century. She was sold away from her husband and child many years ago. Their master wanted afterwards to buy her from the woman who owned her, but she would not let her go. Her father was a Portuguese and her mother an African. Coloured children followed then the political condition of their mother. Her master gave her freedom papers, but she still continued as a member of the family, who for three generations have had a great affection for her. She came to Boston with them when there was a great plague of yellow fever, and has been in this Home about twenty years.

XXXI. *To the same.—Counsels on Community Development.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Aug. 21, 1896.

. . . I hope the Retreat will send us all onward spiritually refreshed. . . . Do not be anxious about getting an increase in numbers. If we grow with such men as the three whom you say are coming, we shall grow well : but we must take care not to incorporate men who have not a real vocation to the Religious Life as one of deadness to the world. A real love to CHRIST at the

right hand of God is what we want, and then even the most important things of the mere Church Militant become insignificant. It is just in proportion as we live in the victory that has been won, that we shall be able to conquer in the skirmishes which yet remain for us to carry on until the Conqueror returns. We must not have any idea of presenting to Him a province on earth, pacified and reduced to submission under our control. If He finds us fighting when He comes back, that is all. A bleeding arm in the Soudan is better than a bright uniform in Hyde Park. Some one spoke of preaching as *a dying sinner unto dying men*. It is better for us to preach as from a living Saviour to men whom He calls to live in His love. But we must be absorbed in that love as our own life. All the gifts of eloquence, philosophy, refinement, and art are much more apt to blur the message of Divine Life than to give it articulation and emphasis. We must all of us realize, both priests and lay brothers, that we have to die to the world, and rise to the life of God's love in the personal experience of fellowship with CHRIST ; and we must take care that our intercourse one with another, whether personally or by letter, does not degenerate into mere earthly interests and gossip. We must see that we love one another in CHRIST, and for CHRIST, not as fellow travellers in a railway train, but as children counting the days as they go by until we reach our FATHER's welcome to the common Home.

XXXII. *To the same.*—Mrs. Moses, alias Harriet Tubner.

BOSTON, U.S.,

May 18, 1897.

We had an interesting historical personage addressing our Temperance Society the other day—Mrs. Moses (as she is called), or, by her proper name, Harriet Tubner. She got the name of Moses because in early life she brought her people out of captivity, leading little bands of slaves to Canada. She is, of course, now an old woman, and, oddly enough, when she was a girl she was considered so weakly and so stupid that no man would buy her. She suffers to the present day from having had her skull fractured by a heavy weight which her master threw when she was only thirteen years of age. It causes her to fall asleep when she sits long still ; but perhaps these long sleeps have supplied her with the extraordinary energy which was required for her heroic work. She is a real Jeanne d'Arc. She cannot read. Perhaps the absence of mental culture has also tended to invigorate her constitution. However, she organized what was known forty years ago as the "underground railroad." She got to know various people who were friendly to the slaves, and they gave her information as to houses where she could get help. So they hid themselves by day in every conceivable place, and she went about and arranged matters so that they might go forward upon the tramp during

the night. She made nineteen journeys. Babies were drugged with paregoric to keep them quiet. Sometimes men were so tired and footsore that they would be inclined to turn back. She would take a revolver, and say, "Dead niggers tell no tales!"—and so drove them onward to freedom in spite of themselves. A reward of forty thousand dollars was offered for her head; and she would sometimes be in the midst of the enemy putting on the appearance of a decrepit old woman, and seeming to be going south instead of north. Though she could not read, she used to invent songs and sing them so that the religious phrases had a meaning which was understood by her people. "Crossing the Jordan to reach the happy land," meant Niagara and Canada. Once she wanted to communicate with some one where letters were not safe. So she dictated, "Hope the old folks are well," and so on. Then at last it came. "Tell your three brothers the good ship is coming, and they must be ready to start at once, though they haven't a moment's warning." The man said, "Can't make head or tail of it. Isn't for me. I have no old folks." But at last he said to himself what he didn't say to the person who read the letter—"It was Moses who dictated it. She's the ship." The Government afterwards, during the war, put her in charge of gunboats, for many of the slaves dreaded the "Yankee Buckra"<sup>1</sup> more than their own masters,

<sup>1</sup> "Buckra," a word used by the negroes to denote a white man.

so that some one was needed who could give them confidence after Lincoln's proclamation of freedom. She had a certain knowledge of Scripture, and how to apply it. Once when she was going south some one remonstrated because she was running into danger. "Oh," said she—"John saw de city, didn't he? And dere was twelve gates, and three of dem were in de south. So I will get in."

Her Life is written by Mr. Bradford, and published on behalf of the house where she lives, with a number of coloured folks under her care, just dependent upon what comes to them from day to day. She has never received any pension or reward.

xxxiii. *To Father Congreve.—A Visit to Niagara.*

RACINE COLLEGE, WIS., U.S.,  
March 7, 1871.

MY DEAR FATHER CONGREVE,

I am getting on, you see, towards the west. I left New York on Wednesday morning, reached Niagara about sunrise, and had a most delightful morning there. You know what a glorious chancel the waters have scooped out. I found a stone, from which I brushed away the snow, and made it the Superior's stall for the occasion. . . . So I sang a choral Matins, Lauds, Prime, and Terce, with the voice of many waters, and mighty thunderings, for an accompaniment, and felt the Society all round about. The mighty stream seemed to tell of



the Great White Throne with the emerald waters around it descending in outpoured fulness on the earth, and rising in the vast clouds of spray, the countless individualities of quickened souls, which rise up around the altar, and are borne onward to God in heaven. Then, again, in the Thursday Cantic at Lauds there seemed to be a special call to read the teachings of the waters in the light of the Exodus. The two great falls moving, as it were, towards each other, as when the watery walls on either side fell down upon the Egyptians, and beneath where I stood the whole breadth of the stream covered over with thick blocks of ice and frozen snow, just as if it were the track of those who had passed by when "the waters were congealed in the depths of the sea." There was before one at once the power of God in letting loose the waters, and the power of God in binding them beneath the unseen touch of the frost. Even so He lets loose the powers of the world, and even so He arrests them. It was delightful to stand in the mid-stream upon the ice and see the waters whirling down towards one's feet and then quietly seeming to disappear. What a parable of the difficulties of life. A few hours in such a scene ought to do one good for the rest of one's life. I got to Milwaukee on Friday at noon; and returned to Chicago on Saturday night to see Bishop Whitehouse, and spent several hours with him. On Sunday, took the services at the little Church of the Epiphany, which, being



vacant, happened to want a priest. I am to hold a sort of Mission at the Cathedral, four days a week, so that my Lent will be henceforth—on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, at Chicago Cathedral, Holy Communion at 7.30 ; Litany and meditation at noon ; Evensong, sermon, and Bible-class at 7.30. On Tuesday evenings at Racine College. On Wednesdays and Thursdays at Milwaukee (two churches), Bible-class at 4.30, sermon and class at 7.30. Father Prescott is, of course, at the Advent, and Father O'Neill at the Bahamas. The Boston congregations are very good indeed, and the work promising well. I had a delightful visit to Bishop Potter in passing through New York—on my return from the Bahamas. He took me to the General Theological Seminary, and introduced me to the students. I addressed them for an hour. . . . God grant us to realize the Passion increasingly as our strength in work, and our rest in weariness.

Ever yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*

xxxiv. *To the same.—On Giving Ourselves to God.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Easter Day, 1881.*

Thanks for your Easter greeting. . . .  
Yes, it is most true, as you say. We must not look to be taken out of man's power because

we have made some effort to give ourselves to God. The true token of our effort being accepted is, indeed, that we are taken out of our own power. It matters not who has power over us, if only we have no freedom of our own. How we should triumph over the world if we could only realize this law of divine acceptance in all the fulness of its truth ! . . .

xxxv. *To the same.—Preaching.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Nov. 18, 1881.

. . . If ——— complains of not preaching, he ought to feel that it is only pride. Many who are much his superiors in ability have next to no preaching, and are all the more acceptable to God for the humility which their silence betokens and helps. We ought always to feel how much more important our prayers are than our preaching ; and it is a much nobler thing to speak to God, than to speak to man, and to do God's will than to do our own. . . .

xxxvi. *To the same.—Delhi—The Cambridge Mission.*

DELHI,  
Feb. 11, 1891.

I suppose Father Page is starting to-day for America. What a contrast ! Delhi and any conceivable city of the West ! Delhi defies imagina-

tion. The city, though with another name, dates back from the time of Moses, and the legendary history of the *Maha-bharata*<sup>1</sup> is cradled within its memories. The city has changed its position many times in the interval. Various kings have found pleasure in destroying the work of their predecessors and calling a new city after their own name. The various ruins are said to spread over forty-five square miles, vast masses of ruin dwarfing all the remains of ancient Rome, and still sheltering lovely pieces of art in sculptured marble, tombs of Mohammedan kings and saints, with a profusion of delicate work which the Alhambra could not rival. As Bishop Heber said, the Pathans built like giants and finished their work like goldsmiths. To-day I said None where I suppose the office was never recited before, in the great square of the Jama Masjid. I took care to sit the wrong way, that the Muezzin as they walked about might not be led to entertain any hopes of my conversion! In that square on certain occasions there are as many as 14,000 men gathered together for worship. When they bow three times at the name of God it sounds like the rustling of a forest. It is a splendid square, and was given back to the Mohammedans after the Mutiny upon condition that we should have free access without taking off our shoes. Near it is the Fort, the great Palace still stupendous in extent, and once gorgeous without an equal in the wealth of jewellery.

<sup>1</sup> One of the two great legendary poems of Brahmanism.

Yesterday I was at a very different scene. The Cambridge Mission have a school and college. It was the prize-giving day. The Inspector of Education for the Punjab came to distribute the prizes. Although few of those who were present were Christians, yet one felt it was like the bud of a living flower springing up amidst the desolations of the past; not the remnant of a smiling past, a garden flower growing wild, but a fresh plant, a fresh life, cultivated by human care, and thriving with the promise of divine benediction, sure to spread its loveliness with ever growing power, so that the royalty of Christian grace and Divine Sonship may raise to the throne of God the multitudes whose ancestors suffered from the oppression of emperors mightier than those of Rome. It was a charming scene. I was glad to witness it amidst the picturesque surrounding and oriental archways of the present home. They move next year into an English structure. In consequence of the cold weather they were all in colours, whereas in summer all would have been in white. The crowd of boys and lads covering the floor were brighter than any bed of tulips, and they seem to have a great devotion to the priests in charge of them. One cannot doubt that the influence of Christianity, as it sinks into their hearts, will gradually lead to a widespread acceptance of Christian truth. They evidently feel the divine joy of the Christian religion as something better than their own religions provide. It is pleasant also to know that there are several mission

stations in the neighbourhood, where little knots of Christians are growing up under the care of catechists, and visited by the clergy periodically. I was quite surprised to find how many baptisms had taken place since Winter came here thirty years ago. They have had to excommunicate several because they would not agree to the terms which are found necessary as a preservation against relapsing into heathen superstitions. But even with these losses the number of converts is very considerable. I communicated on Sunday in the Mission Church, of which we have a photograph at Cowley, and there was quite a large congregation. The service is in Urdu. Lefroy (nephew of Mr. Wilson, of Rownhams) is now in the habit of holding controversial addresses with Mohammedans prepared to reply. They are likely to be very useful. The Mohammedan Moulvies are reading the Bible quite diligently, and trying to turn the prophecies of Isaiah into predictions about Mohammed !

xxxvii. *To the same.—Need of Endowments for the Church in U.S.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Dec. 12, 1895.

Remember, the United States are eighteen times the size of France, and our population double that of France. One cannot be too thankful for such noble works as Dean Hoffman has done at the General Theological Seminary,



and President Seth Low at Columbia College, and our old dear friend Dr. Shattuck, in the schools in which he was interested, and S. Bartholomew's, New York, is a grand centre of manifold organizations under the nurturing wealth of one of the Vanderbilts.

But the Church is pining everywhere for lack of endowments, which might be supplied if there were anything like a proper sense of what God requires of the rich. Districts are being paganized because there is no possibility of maintaining ministers of religion of any denomination. Growing towns are lost to the Church because it is impossible for a handful of Church people to maintain a clergyman at the outset, and so there is humanly speaking no chance for the Church ever to make way in those places. When she does begin, the ground is already occupied. If there were munificence so as to maintain a clergyman in those places to minister to the few, and gather together the continually inflowing settlers until they could maintain themselves, we might look for a great development of spiritual life, but we so sadly want "homes of ecclesiastical learning," such as Hawarden is intended to be.

Bishop Thompson of Mississippi, in the course of a recent address, said, "One of the two or three enormously and absurdly rich men in the country—dead now, and enjoying a little rest, I hope—said to me once, 'I envy you.' 'Envy me?' I asked. 'Yes; you are a free man, your



own master, and doing and saying hopeful things to people every day ; and I am like a blind horse in a bark-mill, tramping the same monotonous path round the safe that contains the deeds and securities.' In the kindness of my heart I offered to relieve him at once of some part of his trouble, and bear his burden like a Christian brother, as S. Paul commands us. I knew exactly where five millions would found a university to do enormous good and make his name a blessing for ever ; where another million would endow ten missionary bishoprics ; where two millions more would build one creditable cathedral, and five millions another ; and ten millions would be invested so as to relieve our Missionary Committee from the stress and anxiety they suffer ; and then five millions more could be soundly invested so as to produce a respectable sum toward the instruction and Christianizing of our seven million negroes. This would not have relieved him entirely—indeed, of only a fraction of his load. He would still have been staggering under a burden which would crush *me*. You may be surprised, but it is nevertheless the fact, that he politely but peremptorily declined my kindly proposal, and groaned under the load till it crushed him, and left it just as heavy for his son to sweat under till he too is dead."

xxxviii. *To the same.—Burmese Monasticism.*

MISSION CHURCH, S. JOHN EVANGELIST,  
BOWDOIN STREET, BOSTON,

*Feast of S. Andrew, 1896.*

The November number of the Magazine has an interesting letter upon Burmese Monasticism. Alas! I wish I could accept the view which it sets forth of good Buddhist monks. There is none good but GOD, and no goodness but what comes from Him. With the first four Commandments eliminated from the moral system, what goodness is possible? There may be no moral fault in a dead body, but I do not see how there can be any good. Hinduism with its "cruelty" may be compared to the man possessed of demons, dwelling in the tombs, and modern Christianity to the paralytic of thirty-eight years standing; but I can only think of a Buddhist monk as Lazarus four days dead. CHRIST can come and cast out the demons, and heal the paralytic, and raise the dead, but I cannot accept mere "deadness to the world," without "life unto GOD" which is of the essence of all Christian monasticism, as having any value, even when it seems to be outwardly harmless.

xxxix. *To the same.—The Future of Christianity in India.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Feb. 9, 1897.

. . . One can only look forward to the future in India with prayer that GOD may overrule both famine and pestilence for the advancement of His glory and the Kingdom of CHRIST. I cannot help feeling that they will effect much greater changes in India than we can at all contemplate. Death is such a different thing to a non-Christian population from what it is to ourselves. Even those among us who have little or no knowledge of death in its joyousness, as taking us to CHRIST, have some consciousness of another world ; whereas to the heathen life is weary and profitless, and death is dreary and indefinite. We learn what they do not know—the value of life on earth as a probation for eternity, and the littleness of its value as a mere place of present consciousness.

So also with Mohammedan views of another world. Their fatalism, and their false security of faith, with a future so little affected by what we should term morality—(a wild parody of the Lutheran doctrine—leading also to rewards which seem not, like Christian hope, to elevate, but, on the contrary, to degrade our expectation of future joy), must, one would think, give way before the presence even of that feeble Christianity which

Europeans present to the natives of India. It is no great enthusiasm which makes one hope that the strong Breath of the LORD may carry that miserable delusion altogether away, as His mighty wind took away the plague of locusts. Would that one could have anything like the same confidence that the movement of the Spirit of the LORD, along with His judgements upon all the earth, might cause a renovation of Christendom, or at least a large resuscitation of Christian life in the midst of Christendom, even though the Christian world as a whole may be past recall. The state of things in India ought to quicken Christian enterprise and missionary zeal. . . . Last week I was at S. Paul's School, Concord, for the anniversary of Dr. Coit's death. What a comfort it is amidst the turmoil of the political world to see a great institution, such as that school, quietly progressing with the vitality of Christian grace.

Thanks for the copies of the *Historial Review* which I received from Parker this morning. How very interesting that paper was in review of Harnack's work. Such bulky acknowledgements of the failure of unbelieving criticism serve as a sort of orchestral representation of drums and artillery to accompany the anthem, "The Daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn!" And yet a fresh generation goes on with the cry in a new key, "Down with it, down with it even to the ground."

XL. *To the same.—What is Existence?*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Nov. 20, 1899.

Many thanks for your letter. One begins to ask, What is existence? Here I am once more!<sup>1</sup> But is existence proper to the body or to the soul—to the one with its category of locality, or to the other with its freedom from all categories—to the one with its passivity, all the ills that flesh is heir to in this sinful world, or to the other with its inchoate participation in the activity of God, Who has permitted one to have a glimpse into His world-wide operations of grace, calling souls to Himself from the delusive world in which each one has to perfect his struggle and gain the reward? One does feel existence is not of earth, but only in God Who calls us out of the world. And yet non-existence is also a reality, for the things that only seemed to be, leave their consequences behind. The struggle of grace is as real as the grace wherein we have to struggle. So it is. Here I am. Yet I know not what it is to be here. To be is to act. To act is to live in God. He is the Truth, the Life, the Power, the only Act, the abiding "I am." Nine years is an eighth part of a man's life. Would that one had advanced to the Second Vespers of the Octave, so as to gain admission to the Eternal.

<sup>1</sup> Written on his return from America after nine years' absence.

I am glad you see such beauties in the Kafir people. The coloured people were a joy to me in America. My class with some dear old ladies verging on one hundred years each, was a function held in a bedroom, which suited me much better than a grand church filled with millionaires, carpets, cushions, and electric light. And so in South Africa, doubtless, still there is many a garden flower growing wild, man's nature not blighted by civilization, but shining with traces of its original lustre, as it was formed to bloom in the garden of the LORD.

XLI. *To the same.—The Power of Love—Catholicity.*

[Reply to a letter from G. C., telling the Father Founder of his course of Lent sermons at Claremont, near Cape Town, founded on his old notes of a Cowley Retreat given by Father Benson to our Community many years before. G. C. wrote that he did not attempt to give the meditations as he heard the Father give them. His *réchauffé* was as like the original, perhaps, as a plate of porridge is like the live oats in the field twinkling in the sun and wind. This phrase will explain the Father's reference to porridge.]

NOTTINGHAM,

*Wednesday in Holy Week, 1903.*

I am spending Holy Week here, and your letter has followed me. Many thanks for it. Oh, how wonderful is love to transform all whereon it touches! Your note shines with the brightness of love transforming past memories



with a glow of life. Divine Love binds us together, and is ever ready to spring forth with its heavenly lustre, waking up the past with a sweetness of memory which it did not deserve. When we see how love enables the dear ones of earth to behold us in such transfiguration, it helps one to feel how the Divine Love of a Creator and Redeemer can transfigure us from earthly littleness to heavenly welcome.

I hope you are experiencing all the blessings of this holy season. How delightful those Tuesdays at Claremont must be ; the graves of the great bishop<sup>1</sup> and dear Father Sheppard must speak with a power which would be somewhat overclouded in the multitudinous memories of a churchyard in England ! It is indeed pleasant to think with such distinct apprehension of those who have now entered into their rest. I am very glad if any words of mine can linger on in unison with your own utterances while you are leading the devout company to climb the ladder.<sup>2</sup>

The twinkling field of oats, and the basin of porridge ! I guess the basin of porridge suits the breakfast-table best ! Thank you for cooking up what I may have said in perhaps not a very digestible form. You bring out the life and the eternal nourishment, which cannot suffer by lapse of time.

I am here where I conducted a mission thirty-two years ago. It seems strange to be lasting on while generations have disappeared.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Gray, the first Bishop of Cape Town.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 S. Pet. i. 5-7.

No ; our Community is not likely to dream dreams. The twentieth century is not likely to be wanting in visions !—visions which are too often new and transitory. If the Apostle complained of every one having a prophecy, I do not know what he would say now ! The simple truth which we have received from the beginning is not what satisfies the present day. What would poor S. Vincent say to have his threefold witness reft of two of its members, so that “Ubique” should be the sufficient test of Catholicity, instead of Catholicity standing like a firm tripod upon its three feet. But nowadays we are not “Catholic” if we ask for anything more than “Ubique,” i.e. Rome ; and, of course, England has to confess herself nobody ; and the ancient Churches of the East also are nobodies. Poor “Ubique” ! It is not much of a test, for if it is taken as a test, it must relapse into a truism. Whoever is not included in the “Ubique” is nobody.

GOD grant you all much blessing with the Easter Festival.

XLII. *To the same.—On the Death of Father Hollings.*

MARSTON STREET,

*April 14, 1914.*

. . . Father Hollings’ death is a great loss to our outward festival, but I trust that our hearts enlarge, so that the absence of many whom we should have liked to have with us serves to

widen our own sense of unbroken unity without injuring our personal consciousness of unbroken joy, while we offer to God our prayers one for the other. The celebration of the all-embracing mystery of His Divine Love knits our hearts in one. . . . I am well, but I am getting more and more blind. One has to think of the great vision which we may hope to attain before long. Meanwhile, may God strengthen us with increasing enjoyment of the years that are passing away! Oh, how one longs for the vision that is to be! It was a blessed transition for Father Hollings.<sup>1</sup> One by one the number of the elect is being made complete. Earthly things seem to lose all their importance in their momentary transition. "Even so, come, LORD JESUS!" is the cry which rises irresistibly from our hearts.

XLIII. *To Brother Gardner (afterwards Father Gardner).—Hebrew Studies.*

RACINE COLLEGE, U.S.,  
*Easter Tuesday, 1871.*

MY DEAR GARDNER,

I have had a letter of yours some time unanswered. It is one of my Easter joys to sit down and answer it. First of all, I send you a note for the Robin Hood<sup>2</sup> children. Next, as to

<sup>1</sup> Father Hollings died suddenly while celebrating the Holy Eucharist, April 8, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> A district of the parish of Cowley S. John in which Brother Gardner was working.

yourself. I am very glad to hear of the Hebrew studies. I hope they will be serviceable to you. Although one may not, perhaps, hope to make great progress in Hebrew, yet even a little knowledge is of great value. One catches the meaning of many passages of the Old Testament which without it are almost hopeless. The construction of the language, although so simple, is so pregnant that, even more than in other languages, an adequate translation is impossible. Then too it is like the Religious Life, so simple in its first appearance, so full in its subsequent developments. We must see that we go on learning to be true Religious by a constantly-increasing attention to the mysteries of God's Word. Wonderful is it how the life of God opens to the soul—but we must watch. It is a laborious and a detailed exercise; the same consonants as it were, but speaking in such fresh fulness of meaning with fresh vowels. The same routine of outward observance, time-table, earthly work, but continually renewed affections, gifts of grace, intentions, joys of heaven.

I hope your bodily health is keeping up. Remember, we must take care of it; but sickness too is just as needful, just as helpful—yes, nearest to the attainment of the Blessing. Do not fret about uselessness. We often do not know when we are doing the most good. One thing is certain. Any good result with which we might be satisfied is so much taken away from our final good. We must therefore just work,

and leave results to God. A telegraphic wire need not complain of being thin. It is just as useful. So realize how truly God is working with you, and you will find His Message has gone forth by you when you did not think it possible. We must each one of us seek those heavenly gifts of holiness by which, indeed, we may benefit the Society by being benefited ourselves. We none of us can bring anything that is of value. All gifts, eloquence, learning, health, etc., become useful only when they are burnt up by the fire of the HOLY GHOST. Pinewood is as good as mahogany to burn. In the great day of the resurrection may God grant our Society to be known by its never-dying flame, whatever the varieties of its graining and colour may have been while here.

God bless you all.

XLIV. *To the same.—Cautions for Catechizing, enclosed in a Letter to Brother Gardner.*

*Undated, probably 1872.*

1. Not to teach as a duty what you have reason to feel assured that persons in the circumstances of your audience either cannot or will not carry out.

If these persons get into the habit of rejecting what is taught them, all their teachableness is destroyed, and although they may give answers,



they have morally lost the capacity of learning truth.

2. Not to teach as important duties what parents are likely definitely to forbid, unless there be the plain authority of Holy Scripture or the Prayer Book requiring it.

However much we may be convinced of the propriety of anything, the first element which it is important to cultivate is the reverence for authority, and not the mere acceptance of anything because we say it.

3. Not to teach outward acts which are not of necessary Christian observance, until the minds of those you are teaching are prepared to understand the meaning of what they do, and their hearts prepared to love the principle involved.

Acts which are valuable when done from the love of CHRIST are destructive of religious growth, and tend to produce unreality, if done without such principle upon mere persuasion.

4. Not to teach things when the teaching of them is likely to produce little result for good, but great result in the way of laughter—for to expose the many to so great a sin would outweigh any good done to an individual.

Let solemn principles be taught, and when they have penetrated the mind, acts will follow with safety by divine inspiration.

5. Not to teach doctrines and practices in such a peculiar manner as you feel would be at variance with the habits of teaching of those to whom you look up—for it is not conceivable that such teach-



ing can be necessary, and if it is a result of self-will it is not love of truth but pride which occasions it. Especially to be careful not to teach what you can imagine would be repugnant to the head of the particular work you are engaged in ; for whether you think him to be right or wrong, it is a violation of obedience to act in such a matter contrary to his wishes whether expressed or supposed.

6. To be careful to make the main body of teaching both in doctrine and practice to consist of what is generally recognized, for the catechumen, whether adult or child, cannot profitably take up with practices over and above the ordinary standard, until he has at least made a hearty endeavour to live up to the ordinary standard.

A religion which begins where other people's religion leaves off must be hollow and hypocritical.

XLV. *To the same.—Counsels to a Deacon.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Oct. 20, 1872.

. . . I am glad you enjoyed Baltimore. It is a charming place, the people are so hearty. Christianity at Baltimore is very different from Boston. Boston wants a great deal of steady hard work. It will take some of your "excitableness" out of you. It is capital material to work upon, the Boston mind. Very different from

Dover's Row.<sup>1</sup> What you teach them they really think about. Teach them as much as possible out of Holy Scripture itself. Your teaching would be all the better if you had not read so many Roman catechisms. Remember it is very important with a thoughtful people like the Bostonians not to mix up legend and faith, and not to make the Sacramental system the foundation, with the Apostles' Creed for an ornament. You will understand what I mean. Get them really to appreciate and love the Incarnation itself, not merely its surroundings and consequences. If it is once truly apprehended, the rest will follow; but if the surroundings are made supreme, they themselves lose what would have been their true glory. Make your catechizing as much as possible out of Holy Scripture. Thoughts which have been well learnt in Bible words are germinant, and full of power.

The great thing in America is to get the people to recognize Divine Authority as the controller of their actions. The sense of control being so much lost, it is difficult for them to feel it even in religion. It is therefore very important to develop the authority of Holy Scripture, which they can recognize, and through which they come to realize God's control over us in His Church.

Their minds need a long training before they really can come into a position to recognize what sin is. Sin has blinded their eyes—the sin of law-

<sup>1</sup> A street in Cowley S. John, where Brother Gardner used to work.

lessness—with a greater moral blindness than would be found arising from more foul crimes in this country. The thing above all others necessary is to cultivate the sense of supernatural truth. The supernatural they delight in, but when detached from moral truth. They need to learn that a moral life is the most supernatural of all things, and that it requires the gift of the HOLY GHOST as its antecedent—that religion is not merely stuck about with wonders, but is supernatural throughout.

. . . You two must try to get on thoroughly happily together, bearing one another's burdens. Seek to become as recollected as you can. The discipline of your Celtic ardour is a great work to undertake. When apart from the Community of course you find your own peculiarities and those of others coming out into greater prominence. Community life hides up a good deal. I fear you may have rather a trying time with various people, but I have no doubt God will overrule all for good. Only do not get excited by any parochial disturbance. Try to keep calm, and help Father Grafton with your constant prayers.

XLVI. *To the same.—Weakness—Preparation for Death—Meditation.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Aug. 16, 1873.*

I am glad that you have entered so fully into the expression of your feeling of weakness. Always

do let me know how you feel from time to time. I am very anxious about you, but it is with an anxiety which rests in the knowledge that there is One Who loves you far better than I can, by Whom all things will be ordered for your good. He has raised you up already in wonderful ways, and He will sustain you amidst all weakness. In our weakness He manifests His power. There is great joy in being forced to feel that each breath we draw is a special gift from Him. Year by year we must long the more to see Him Whom our soul loveth.

You ask me how to prepare for death. Live constantly in the love of GOD, watching for the appearing of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Our hearts should be constantly rising up with the welcome—"Even so, come, LORD JESUS." We can attain to the fitness for heaven only by the power of divine love, and that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST. Outward rules may break us away from the world, but it is only love which perfects us in GOD. We must ask Him to teach us more and more to love Himself. What are we waiting for in the world? We are only waiting until we have attained more love. We must know this as all-sufficient. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" etc.

Do not be distressed because of your great sense of bodily languor. This physical weariness does not hinder the repose of the soul in GOD, although it hinders our consciousness of that

repose. We are not less pleasing to God because our bodies are irksome to ourselves. On the contrary, this very irksomeness is the form of sacrifice which we are called to offer. The saints of old endured much weariness. Spiritual energies enable us to persevere, but they do not make us insensible to outward pain. I should advise you to get some real rest in the afternoons, and that regularly, not merely when you feel very tired. You will probably find that the time thus apparently lost, is far more than made up for by the power of using the remainder of the day effectively.

As for meditation, probably you will do well rather to meditate for yourself than to use any book. You can use books at times, and at times there will be meditations of my own coming over—and there are those you have had in former time; but I would have you seek to enlarge your spirit in spontaneous meditations as the HOLY SPIRIT may guide you. The writings of others are helpful to us at times. But the Voice of the Spirit in our own hearts is far better. Meditate much upon heaven and its joy—the sight of God and of the Lamb. Probably it is well to meditate most upon the Passion when we are strong, and upon JESUS in glory when we are weak and suffering. We need the contemplation of the glory into which He is entered to enable us to follow on bearing our cross after Him.

I am very sorry that the houses both at Boston and Bridgport have to be left so democratized. But I see no help for it at present. Father



Grafton will be returning soon. Father Prescott is on the water now, but he must not come to either place as he is merely gone for health, and needs perfect rest. He will just visit you for a day or two before his return. It is impossible for me to come. I think, if I had my own way, I should come with all the novices and occupy the Seminary.<sup>1</sup> We should then have a novitiate much more free from interruptions than it can be in England. But the various Sisterhoods which look up to us make that impossible. I do not know whether I shall even manage to get out to India. I feel that if possible I ought to go there from November till April.

XLVII. *To the same.—The Teachings of Sickness.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 9, 1874.

I am sorry to hear from Father Grafton that you were so poorly when he wrote last. Nevertheless, is not sickness a great Epiphany? How many things God manifests to us in sickness which otherwise we could not learn! As we have to go into the dark to see some bright object, so it is in the darkness of outward suffering that we first catch the real glimpses of the Light that is better than that of earth. Yet we are not unlike children who are afraid when the room is darkened,

<sup>1</sup> That is, the house at Bridgport, which had originally been built for a Seminary.



although eager to see what shall be shown them. So we are often fearful and cast down as we enter into the darkness—the cloud preparing for a transfiguration glory.

We must not be worried if we find it is so, for, in fact, this is the very necessity of the darkness. A darkness which was not felt would be no real darkness. The soul must pass through its own darkness—not merely help the body through the bodily darkness—and this is the victory by which we pass securely through the darkness, even our faith.

The darkness, whether it overflow the body or the mind, is no darkness with Thee. It is a great blessing when God leads us on the way of faith to experience His sustaining power. Gleams of joy shine out brighter and brighter. "When they saw the Star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." May this joy be yours increasingly! I am so glad to hear that you seem to be making way with the people of the neighbourhood. It is very cheering to see a movement going on around, and really the time is very short since you arrived to work amongst them.

We are now anxiously looking forward to the London Mission. It cannot fail of being a great "Valley of decision." We look to Bridgport to uphold the arms of Moses on the Mountain.

Much love and blessing to all the Community.

XLVIII. *To the same.—The Mystical Jerusalem—  
An Evangelical Conference at Oxford.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Sept. 1, 1874.

Many thanks for your interesting and sportsmanlike letter from Lake Champlain. The natural history must have found you a formidable invader of that lovely domain. It certainly is a beautiful lake. I suppose that while you were there you rose to the sentiment of the locality as well as to the field sports, and read some of Margaret Davidson's poetry.

Well, now to return to our own fair land, the mystical Jerusalem. The fair sights of earth make one always feel the joy of this all the more. Other beauties fade, but every day of the Divine Light shines on in the light of each successive day, until Eternity shall sum up all their brightness in the manifold fulness of Him from Whom such gifts of glory came. It makes one feel the weariness of life on earth, and yet it helps one to bear it. How foolish we are to wish to have things bright around us. If we have once seen the heavenly Light we ought to be willing to trust all to Him. The whirl and worry of earthly things will soon be over.

Mr. — has been travelling in the Holy Land. When at Jerusalem the Greek Patriarch was very kind to him, and supplied him with altar and vestments to celebrate on the spot where Abraham offered up Isaac. He said he would

always be happy to give an altar to any accredited priest of the "Ancient English Church." I am sorry to say that Oxford just now is in the excitement of a less desirable fraternization. Yet I hope that God will overrule all for good. One feels that what is done simply with the desire of His glory must help many faithful souls into the Light. After all, how full of darkness is our own light, although we may see the evil of others. There is a light of the heart and a light of the head, and surely those who are struggling on in the power of the former shall be helped to rejoice at length in the latter also. It is the same Blessed Spirit of Light Who operates in both ways, and His workings must be one in their end as they are one in their origin. The Town Hall is the great scene of this gathering, headed by two divines from America, Mr. Pearsall Smith (I don't know his denomination) and Dr. Boardman, Baptist. It is not exactly an Evangelical Alliance meeting, but more of the nature of a Retreat "for the advancement of Scriptural holiness." I am having some special services in Church this week at 9 and 3, and a course of sermons on prayer after Evensong by Father Rivington.

I am not sure whether you know that both — and — have failed of their vocation. It is a disappointment, but at the same time a cause of thankfulness. It helps us to realize that our life is something. We should otherwise be tempted to forget that there must be the drawing

by the FATHER. We need constantly to dwell upon the thought of our supernatural vocation in order that we may be able to live according to it.

NOTE.—Father Benson received an invitation to take part in the conference of various Christian denominations here referred to. In a courteous reply he said that, though unable to accept the invitation, he sincerely sympathized with their object, the deepening of spiritual life among Christians. In sympathy with their good desires, he would add to the services in the Iron Church a daily sermon on prayer. He added that if any member of the conference should honour the Mission House by a visit, it would be a pleasure to him to welcome them. Accordingly one day three of the leaders came to dinner with us, Dr. Boardman, Mr. Pearsall Smith, and M. Monod. The reading that day in the Refectory happened to be of the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea. When the reading was ended, Father Benson opened the conversation that followed by observing how happy it was for us Christians to realize that we start upon our life in this world with the Red Sea between us and the land of bondage, rescued from the enemy, baptized into CHRIST. A very animated and interesting discussion ensued between the Superior and his guests on the subject so introduced.

XLIX. *To the same.—On Bodily Suffering.*

Jan. 22, 1875.

I hope you have by this time safely got through the painful operation which your last letter mentioned as being in store.

I know you will not shrink from pain. One is rather thankful to have the question of chloroform settled for one. How far it may be right to refuse such an anodyne it is difficult to say ; but if it can-

not be used, then at any rate God's will is plain. We cannot tell why this discipline of pain is assigned to the creatures of this sinful world. But we do know that by means of it God is working out a special glory for His people. If we suffer with the Crucified we shall be glorified together. It is no mere execution of penalty for the satisfaction of Divine Justice. We know very little about it, and yet people are so apt to think that the one side they know, although they see even that very imperfectly, must exhaust the purpose of God. How little of the suffering of this world is penal in the simple sense of being remedial, as people understand those words! The life of grace does in some mysterious way grow out of suffering. May He Who has ordained this law, as He calls you to suffer, grant you the blessed illumination of grace as your earnest in this suffering world of the joy of the Everlasting Light.

I hope your body has been able to bear the strain, as I know your heart will have done.

L. *To the same.—Deadness to the World for Men of Business and for the Clergy.*

MARGARET STREET, W.

*Vigil of the Annunciation, 1881.*

. . . I am glad that you have the opportunity of doing some mission work in the



way of preaching in Wales. It is a little step towards the fulfilment of our prayer for the establishment of a Religious House in the Principality.

I am not surprised to hear of your father's continuing weakness. . . . May God bring strength out of this weakness. How gracious He is in that He does accept us when the world has lost its hold upon us, instead of rejecting us because in our time of strength we clung to the world. I say *we*, for although in our case it may not be true in the same sort of way as with men of business, yet probably if we look deep into our own hearts we shall find that so far as we have any consciousness of strength we are very sadly clinging to the world. We should probably be surprised to find how little we had really by our own will died to the world until, or except in so far as, God's Providence has made the death a necessity. In a man of business or pleasure the mutual grasp of the world and of the soul is a very evident thing. In us as ministers of religion and Religious, the world assumes a much more spiritual manifestation. Yet the worldly heart of the spiritual man is apt to be sadly locked up in the fellowship of a spiritual world of its own. And we need to die to all our own visions, that we may be pure in heart and see God.



LI. *To the same.—Laughter.*

ABERDEEN,

Aug. 19, 1882.

I wish I could arrange with the Emir to take a laundry in America, and let me go and be a martyr at Mecca !<sup>1</sup>

I do not know whether the drollery of the world or its weariness is the worst. I suppose there would be nothing to laugh at if there were nothing incongruous, and there would be nothing incongruous if there were nothing wrong. Laughter is God's gift to sinful man to make life supportable. Oh, for the calm unruffled joy of the vision of Paradise !

LII. *To the same.—No Competition in the Mission Field.*

THORNTON HEATH,

Nov. 22, 1889.

. . . I am very glad that the mission difficulty is likely to have a good settlement. I thought that it was recognized among all the missions in India that there was to be no sheep-stealing. Those folds which cannot give good grass will soon find themselves incapable of managing, and the sheep will pass honestly and

<sup>1</sup> Few remain to whom this cryptic sentence will be intelligible, nevertheless it is left as introducing the passage that follows.

profitably to some better fold. We have so little power to carry on our own mission work amid the vast population of India, or even to maintain what is begun—that it does seem to be foolish to grab at what other people are doing. We may be thankful for anything that is done, even in the least satisfactory way. All is helping forward the good cause in the end, even though for our lifetime there may seem to be some confusion.

LIII. *To the same.—A Visit to Benares.*

ALLAHABAD,

Jan. 28, 1891.

I spent Monday at Benares, and took an oar in a boat upon the Ganges! Ought I not to feel a greater man after rowing on such a great river? I went to the C.M.S. station. They seem to be doing a very good work there. Mr. Davis recommended me to get a boat and see the city from the river. I saw some of the bathers going through their functions, and women throwing garlands to the river, and bodies being dipped and burned in all the stages of their funeral rites, and the remains thrown into the Ganges. The river ought to lose its sacred character next year, but I believe the Brahmans have agreed to get the chronology altered so that funds may not come to an end as they ought to do!

LIV. *To the same.—A Visit to Calcutta—"Lux Mundi."*

CALCUTTA,

Feb. 17, 1891.

I got back here this morning, and we got off, the Oxford missionaries and myself, for a week's Retreat into the country this afternoon. It is only four Sundays since I left Calcutta, but all that I have seen in the interval makes it seem an age. The interests of the North-West, from the Mohammedan invasion down to the Mutiny, are overwhelming, and the hopes of the future infinite. I was very glad to see Winter and the Cambridge Mission in their work. The Mohammedans are paying good attention now to the Bible. The great desire of some Moslems who came to controvert with Winter was to show that Isaiah lx referred to Mohammed! And that the Arabians under Omar, who built the Mosque, were *the righteous nation loving the truth* who were prophesied as entering in! Poor II Isaiah! What with Germany and Arabia, his fate is as sad as S. Paul's beneath his commentators.

The article to which you refer about *Lux Mundi* (*Indian Quarterly Review*) was written by a very good and learned man, but it struck myself as being unfortunately bitter. Controversy is very apt to have the effect of boiling water upon tea-leaves, in bringing out what is poisonous after it has brought out what is refreshing. There was one point in which I did not go along with him. I do not think any one could mistake the

meaning of the name *Lux Mundi*. It would be perverse to suppose that it meant any one but Him Who is the Light. The criticism reminded me of a Christmas decoration at Cowley church in Mr. Coley's time. Legend round the pulpit, "I am the Light of the World." In that case perhaps the suggestion was more obvious, and the simple-mindedness of the man more Scotch in its unconsciousness of the irony.

LV. *To the same.—An Easter Letter.*

FORT ST. GEORGE, MADRAS,  
*Maundy Thursday, 1891.*

MAY GOD grant us all to rise to newness of life at this time. *From strength to strength* must be our constant motto as Easter comes round. We must gain the strength in whatever way GOD is pleased to give it to us. Sometimes weakness is our strength. We must accept it in whatever way GOD gives it. We cannot foresee even the immediate future, much less the great future which is in store. The developments of the future which awaits us are just as great as the transition from the first Easter Eve to the first Easter Morn—just as great because they are but a sequence of the same law. Natural things are being transformed into supernatural, yet we are so unwilling to follow along with the transformation. For it is a transformation that always involves a deathblow to some cherished objects of the earthly and actual present. The natural man can

appreciate a growing civilization in which fresh powers are developed, and no power of nature is lost. It is the losing in order to gain, from which the natural heart revolts. But that is the Easter law—loss, proportionate to the gain, cheerfully accepted in loving faith.

LVI. *To the same.*—*Old Age and Death.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Aug. 10, 1894.

I am sorry that your report of Father Biscoe is not a brighter one, but the brightness of a higher life shines out upon our times of bodily weakness.

As you say. I never expected to reach the seventieth milestone! One must not repine at the length of the way, but be humbled at thinking how much of so many years has been wasted. The desire to depart is modified by the consciousness that one has not yet any right to claim admission to the Presence Chamber. One must learn something more of that Presence upon earth before one can complain of being held back from it. Indeed if we felt CHRIST's presence here as we ought to feel it, we should scarcely need the removal. Anyhow, we must be thankful to be kept here so long as there is any power of growing in the apprehension of faith, that so we may rise up to the blessedness of the Vision when we are called within the veil. Perhaps all three of us may meet there soon. May God grant us

grace to finish our course with joy whether the discipline of earth be long or short.

LVII. *To the same.*—*Character of Father Goreh.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

May 10, 1896.

In Father Goreh the intellectual element of character was distinctly dominant over the sentimental—I use this word purposely rather than “the affectionate,” for he was full of affection. This, I think, accounts for his parting with his daughter in childhood. He was intellectually convinced that the best thing was to do so. There was no hardness of duty nor coldness of feeling. Consequently, one knows how full of affection the father and daughter mutually were in later life.

Of course I did not know him in those early days. It is difficult for us who have grown up under the sweet influences of Christian home-life to appreciate the relative bearings of “truth and love” upon a convert from Hinduism. I suppose such a separation would not seem to be so strange to a young man brought up in the hard rules of a Brahman family. A daughter would not be regarded as we should regard a daughter, and although Goreh had escaped from Brahmanism, yet the full growth of the human soul, with its individual affections, would scarcely be ready to assert itself all at once.



His love for his brother was intense, but I used to tell him that he would never convert his brother by sheer logic. Their disputes as to the mystery of creation, i.e. the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human free-will, never could result in any good. In fact, his brother was always sure to have the best of it in argument, for by accepting the human mind as the measure of truth Nehemiah<sup>1</sup> eliminated the divine will which he wished to establish. He was trying to work out an equation so as to get rid of an insoluble factor. He was trying to prove the possibility in the abstract of an actual law under which we have all of us, Christian or Hindu, to live day by day. The intellectual grasp of our relation to God thus rose above the affectionate acceptance of God's love.

God's Personality can only be known as the expression of a loving relationship towards man. I suppose that when a Hindu comes to apprehend the Personality of God, the intellectual sense of separation must operate somewhat hardly to sever Godhead from manhood, before the affectionate response of the heart to God's merciful dispensations can recognize the atonement as the final purpose of creation, so that the creature may become one with God through the infinity of His love. I mean by the atonement here, not the mere recovery of sinners from the Fall, but the gathering up of the many into one, the indissoluble gift of divine life which underlies the

<sup>1</sup> Father Goreh's Christian name.

mazes of Pantheistic error. Father Goreh was fully alive to the greatness of divine love, but I think he felt that it must be adored at a distance. Yet he had also a very personal sense of God's goodness to himself in calling him to be a Christian, when so many failed of the call. As I look back, I am not sure that there was not a certain lack of apprehending God's positive *will* that all men should be saved, although he felt that God offered a possibility to all. He thought men stupid if they did not see the force of his arguments. He scarcely, perhaps, apprehended the moral hardness of heart which held men back within the atmosphere of argument, and so prevented their appreciating the greatness of God's love in modes of operation which no argument could explain.

I do not suppose it would be right to say that his was a very peculiar mind. It was very different from the Anglo-Saxon; but I suppose it was a very typical Hindu mind of the very best calibre. I do not know that I have made his intellectual position any clearer by the illustrations of thought which I have given; but of course he was not an Anglo-Saxon—and we must not expect a high-caste Brahman to be an Anglo-Saxon.

With reference to his daughter, I think he would have felt it a weakness to refuse to part from her, but he loved her all the same. And so with reference to God: he rose to the devout acknowledgement of God's holiness, and God's

personal goodness to mankind, and to himself in particular ; but perhaps it was goodness rather than love. Such love as we recognize towards God requires the atmosphere of domestic Christian love to make itself fully felt.

The home of his Brahmanical youth would not have developed this consciousness—a love originating in God's eternal purpose, and consummated in the personal enjoyment of God's eternal life. To many of the early Fathers how much philosophy predominated over what we in this century should call simple piety ; and how much the well-intentioned piety of many round about us grows wild, because it has not the safeguards of such philosophic restraint. Father Goreh was deeply solicitous for his brother's conversion. I have often hoped and prayed that his death might accomplish what his reasoning failed to do.

So with reference to the Prarthana-Samaj and others. He was terribly disappointed that he could not argue them down. But it was a letter from him which brought Ramabai to the Faith ; and I have no doubt that we shall find his life to have been much more extensively influential than we are at all aware of.

He was very happy at Cowley, in spite of those fits of depression which he exaggerates when he writes about his feelings. Of course, when he came to us he was invalided for the rest of his life. We cannot wonder, therefore, at his feeling often physically depressed. When it was cold he used to say, "But then, you know, India is not

hot enough for me !” When he spoke of not having a vocation to the Religious Life, it was really humility. He had not the strength for such an exercise of Religious Life as would have been his ideal. As years went on he became feebler and less capable of taking ordinary food. He felt too that he ought to be going back, so as to work among his own people. Physical infirmity developed scrupulosity. Of course, at last he could not live by rule. He had to live a painful life, but was cheerful amidst it all, although sometimes depressed. The body was depressed, but the mind was always resting in God’s goodness—not with the ecstasy of a Spaniard, or that mixture of contemplation and action which gives brightness and calmness to an English Churchman, but with a sense of perfect repose in God as the end to be attained when this weary life of isolation and feebleness should be over. There was never any cloud of distrust. He did not distrust God ; he distrusted himself. Sore wrestlings with Satan could not be wanting to one who was so exceptionally called from Satan’s tyranny to bear witness to the truth. Was joy wanting to Lazarus ? He had a sense of joy too deep to show it. Was joy wanting to One greater than Lazarus ? Surely not, yet the expression of joy was not such as beams upon the triumphant face of a modern philanthropist. I would sooner have the joy of Father Goreh in his weakness of body, his spiritual struggles, his sense of isolation from every natural sur-

rounding, than all the outward joyousness of an active partisan who rejoices in the success of plans which surpass his expectation, because his expectation is not calmly resting in the security of God.

LVIII. *To the same.—On the same subject.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

May 11, 1896.

I wrote you a letter enclosed to Father Page respecting Father Goreh's joylessness. It will probably arrive a week after this, but I do not know. I am not sure that I did not too much accept the theory of his joylessness. Really, when one thinks of his infirmity of body, and constant pain and difficulty as to food, and the absence of those alleviating circumstances which we should have, one must rather wonder at his being so cheerful. Cut off from all family interests and national sympathies, he had nothing to cheer the outer nature ; but, in spite of all, he did live cheerfully in hidden communion with CHRIST. He was intensely humble, and yet never desponding. He had a deep sense of the Divine Majesty. He was shocked at the glibness with which the Divine Office is often said. He used specially to remember how Dr. Kay paused before kneeling down to prayer. He had a habit of reverence which is sadly wanting in the present day, and the outward expression in his case was the more noticeable because of the



oriental deliberateness—slowness both of thought and action.

India was the whole world to him, and life in CHRIST his all in all. I think he was so absorbed in India—and well he might be—that he scarcely thought of other countries. I do not mean in any childish spirit, but with a childlike absence of thought as to matters which did not concern him. He felt the importance of every human soul as bearing God's image. He did not regard India in any selfish spirit, as if he grudged the claims of other heathen. He loved all for God's sake : but, as he knew India, his thoughts were fixed upon India. He was all the while looking forward, with a confident expectation that sustained him in all bodily weakness, to a better country, as truly as Abraham or Isaiah could have done. He had passed out of Maya and its misery, and he felt the reality of man's created nothingness and God's creative sovereignty. He felt the personal shame of man's fallen estate, as Isaiah did. The beloved disciple who leant on the LORD's bosom at the Supper, fell at His feet as dead when he saw His glory in His Church. It did not imply any lack of faith made perfect by love, if dear Father Goreh had more sense of human deadness than many have who worship God with undue familiarity, and mistake that want of reverence for excess of faith.

It was the humility of faith, joined with the depth of a true philosophy, which was so remarkable in Father Goreh.



LIX. *To the same.—On his Return from America.*

THE MISSION HOUSE,  
COWLEY S. JOHN,  
OXFORD,

Nov. 20, 1899.

Only to think that I am writing to you again from Cowley. The last nine years seem to belong to another world. They may have been a dream, a sleep, an absorption into the mysteries of God. One can scarcely feel that all along one has been treading this *too, too solid earth*, and that one has come back to the morrow of the day of departure nine years ago! One comes back to great changes, and yet those changes are so insignificant compared with the steady stream of life and its interests, both human and divine, which is going on just as when one left. I have just had a Retreat with more than seventy sisters at All Saints. The chapel, with all its sisters, looking just the same; the caps looking just the same, but hiding faces and hearts, some of them known and loved of old, others changed in locality and office, but still abiding in the onward stream; others, again, altogether new, but gathered up into the old marching order of the immortals, fresh soldiers filling the ranks of the old fight. When one thinks of those who have risen through death to claim the victory, it seems strange that one has still to carry on the fight.

Since my return I have been reading Father Goreh's Life. It is very interesting. There is more of interest in it than I had expected to find. I was afraid that there would not have been sufficient incident to give it reality. It quite calls back to memory the years that are past, and the notices of Father O'Neill add a thread of interest which gains beauty by the contrast of the two characters. I am so thankful that you have been able to complete it.

LX. *To the same.*—*The "Round Table" at Fulham Palace.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Jan. 15, 1902.

I was at the Round Table Conference at Fulham. We had two very interesting days there. I was surprised to find how Confession, both name and thing, was generally accepted by those who were present: although, of course, one knew as a matter of fact it must be in some way carried out by Evangelicals in any earnest dealing with souls. All who were present seemed to lay aside all controversial bitterness.

LXI. *To the same.*—*The Discipline of Sickness.*

DROITWICH,  
April 10, 1902.

I am adding one just now to the S.S.J.E. list of invalids. I hope God is making us perfect

through weakness. It is a great blessing to have one's own natural will put under chains. The chains of light and grace in this world are to keep us from the chains of darkness by which the strong will of the arch-rebel is violently held down for the judgement of the Great Day. Bodily weakness is the touch of a loving FATHER bidding us rejoice in His discipline. It is, however, our duty to seek for the elasticity of health, even though it be difficult to use health. We have to learn to use health by bearing weakness.

I am come here to try and get rid of my rheumatism, and I have good hope that ere the three weeks are ended I shall be much more capable. The effect of these brine baths is wonderful.

I cannot say that our guests are very cheerful. Perhaps you do not expect that in a hotel full of rheumatic inmates. But as we are very apt to be cast down by anticipating coming trouble, so we ought by analogy to be very jubilant in the anticipation of coming delight. It is best to cherish a joyous equanimity in the knowledge that both troubles and delights are the gift of our loving FATHER.

LXII. *To the same.—Strength out of Weakness—  
The Book of Job.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Dec. 5, 1902.

A letter is always welcome, even if it tells of your bodily suffering and weakness. Well!

GOD giveth more strength. We can understand that GOD strengtheneth us in spite of weakness, but we have to learn experimentally that the weakness is the very means by which the strength comes. Satan seeks to destroy us by weakness, but every blow that he inflicts recoils upon himself, and makes the divine strength of those whom he assails shine out with power. We feel the wounds. The sons of GOD who are watching us shout for joy as they witness the power which those wounds develop.

This will reach you just at Christmas time. JESUS took upon Himself our weakness, that He might lead us, as partners in His Passion, to gain the victory and tread Satan under foot. May the light of His countenance cheer your heart with the fulness of Christmas joy. How sadly apt we are to obscure that joy by the outward festivities by which we pretend to honour it. There is no Christmas so happy as the Christmas of a sick room !

I am delivering a course of lectures on Job, and endeavouring to bring out Job as the "hated one," the object of the "hatred" between the serpent and the woman, and so the type of our LORD's Humanity. Elihu, on the other hand, stands out as the "young Man," the Second Adam, the Divine Champion coming in the personal Godhead to rebuke the profanity of worldly wisdom, and his utterance is merged in the utterance of GOD speaking from the cloud of the Divine Omnipotence. How wonderfully it ex-

plains and carries on the story of Genesis i, ii, iii, and prepares the way in the Old Testament for the temptation and agony, the narrative of the Gospels, and the triumph of the Apocalypse. I cannot conceive people treating it merely as a magnificent poem, which is the fashion of the present day, and not seeing that it is the counterpart of the Gospel, the spiritual demoniacal side of the suffering Redeemer's life. How much of the mysterious power of the Old Testament is lost if we will not use the Book of Job as giving the key to the development.

Chapter i of Genesis shows us how God was during those six days preparing within the Satanic world of darkness a home for man as His favoured offspring. From the first outshining of light to the planting of Eden, God was fencing His favourite creature round with all that he needed, as Satan complained. And now how blessed it is to feel that every suffering comes to us, not from God's anger, but from God's love ; that every pain is inflicted by Satan under God's permission, not for our punishment, but that we may glorify Him by triumphing in the endurance of it.

If we realize life as a warfare upon earth with Satan, the prince of this world, how different it is from a mere dull period of probation, ever ending in failure, because we do not satisfy God. Yet we ought never to come to the Holy Eucharist without remembering that our object is not to find a home in a Christianized world, but to bear ourselves as members of the Church, the kingdom of



light, militant here upon earth against the darkness of Satan, until he, and those who have yielded to him in earthliness, shall be cast out into the abyss, and the kingdom of the faithful redeemed shall shine out in glory.

Christendom is losing its divine consciousness. I have a very confident expectation that by GOD's mercy a few years will see the heathen stretching out their hands, and lifting up their hearts to accept the Divine Redeemer. We must not be discouraged because of various phases in the strife, which may show that people misapprehend what we offer to them as Christianity. CHRIST can and will bring the truth home to many in the fulness of power. There must be a great struggle before the end, and then—an endless victory—not on earth, but on the throne of GOD.

Christmas speeds us on from year to year, with the continual freshness of power belonging to our new-born Saviour.

LXIII. *To the same.*—*Christianity Miraculous.*

COWLEY,

*S. Philip and S. James, 1907.*

The Whitsun Festival will have past before this reaches you, but I hope the blessed gifts which belong to it will be remaining in their full joyousness of divine love, which we ought to experience more and more with each successive year. Each Whitsuntide should find us advanced since the preceding year in the knowledge of our



LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and in that experimental knowledge we must gain increasing presentiments of the final joy wherein we are to know the blessedness of the Eternal Trinity. People often feel that the Trinity season lacks the joy of varied festivals such as cheered us before, but we ought rather to feel ourselves lifted up above the changeful experience of time, to rest in the all-surpassing glory of the Triune Vision.

I am glad to hear that you get about cheerily and actively upon your crutches. Crutches symbolize earthly life. They are the inheritance of the Cross. As we see them we must feel ourselves identified with the Crucified. He is the Way, and He does not lift us up in a moment to know Himself as the Life. This is a gradual revelation. We must know the thirst of the Cross before we can say "It is finished."

People have no idea of the miraculous character of Christianity, but we shall never convert India unless we let it be known that Christianity is one great miracle, from CHRIST the Head to us His feet in whom He walks upon the earth. There can be no ceremony proper to Christianity which is not a miracle. Prophets could not see what we have to proclaim in our preaching. David could not pray as we are called to pray when we say *Our Father*. Nothing is truly Christian unless it incorporates the mystery of the Incarnation, GOD and man, CHRIST *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. People talk of the time when miracles

ceased ; but, alas ! Christianity ceased at the same time.

It is lamentable to think how unchristian the sixth millennial period has become by the spread of nominal Christianity. People pined for outward miracles, and lost sight of the only miracle which was important—the miracle of Divine Life.

We cannot join in the triumphant commendation wherewith CHRIST returned unto the FATHER, until we have our share in those words whereby the discipline of the Cross must be completed. "*It is finished.*" The way of the Cross may be long, but we must know CHRIST as the Way ; and, however long, it is the Way of Life.

Father R. is reading to me Pusey on Hosea. How wonderful is both the denunciation and the hope with which Hosea is full ! The Jezreel, scattered in judgement, to be the seed of the more glorious harvest of world-wide benediction ! That same law must be the law of life in CHRIST's Church through all changes. Whatever troubles we may have by reason of our sins, great shall be the day of Jezreel.

I have no doubt that our troubles in Bombay will issue in some great benefit both to ourselves and to our mission work. The true progress of CHRIST's work must be miraculous in proportion to the trouble through which it has emerged. The serpent's head cannot be crushed by satin slippers !

LXIV. *To the same.—On Bodily Suffering.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Easter Week, 1908.*

According to the reports conveyed to us in successive letters for some time past, you have had much to bear in the way of physical suffering, but I do not doubt that God not only gives you grace to bear all with thankfulness, but that He has also given you much grace as the issue of each successive trial.

The pains of a long-continued bodily infirmity pass away, but the spiritual gifts which have been thus acquired linger on in capacities of resurrection life, which are given to us in Him Whose cup we are permitted to share. Human nature is apt to formulate various expressions of regret for human suffering which we and those we love may have to bear ; but Divine Sonship speaks in our hearts with an increasing response to the Fatherly love, which permits us by any suffering to gain an increasing anticipation of the glory which awaits us as members of the Crucified. We may well be content to live on in this sinful and suffering world, if, while we live on, we know we are being purified by a FATHER's love for the glory which shall not fail us in the end. God's gifts do not lose by delay, but our capacities increase by the growing expectation of faith.

LXV. *To Father O'Neill.—The Indian Mind.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
*Sept. 11, 1874.*

MY DEAR FATHER O'NEILL,

As the Indian mind is very different from ours, you cannot expect to see the same *sort* of results there as you would look for among ourselves. It could not, in fact, be healthy for them. They may Europeanize their houses, but they cannot Europeanize their mental or moral system. Probably—but I may be wrong—the mind is with them the moving power, overruling the moral sense; whereas with us, especially us English, the moral sense overrules the mind. By mind I do not mean such mind as Butler's or Bacon's, but a subtlety of thought producing just that fidgetiness which you describe, and along with it reticence, and often a hesitation and tentativeness, which seems to us like duplicity, though it may be very consistent with honesty in them. They will be liable both to commit themselves impulsively to more than they had thought of, and to draw back into themselves cautiously and timidly until they have fully adjusted external circumstances to their own standpoint. The want of strength of physical constitution favours this.

You refer to the falseness of women. It is very much for the same reason. A lie or a deceit is the natural refuge of the tender and weak, so savage and wandering nations retain more truth than civilized nations do.

The steady Saxon character can bear the roughness which truth involves. No doubt the Eastern is much more clearly untruthful than the Western. And yet when one sees how lying has eaten into the whole life of great nations in the West, in religion, business, courtesy, social intercourse, and even when evidence has to be given on oath, one cannot wonder to find it a terrible power amongst nations which have not yet been Christianized. Probably the European races, with all their falsehood, are not now anything like what they were when Christianity first came to them, and we must hope that divine grace will stablish the Hindu in Truth. "I am the Way and the Life and the Truth." CHRIST is the Principle of truth by which human nature *needs to be*, and *can be*, regenerated. Human nature in its depravity cannot apprehend truthfulness. "Every one that is of the Truth heareth My Voice." But the principle of truth has doubtless died out, and can only be renewed by a specially divine gift. "He that doeth truth cometh to the Light." The profession of this principle of truthfulness is laid down by our LORD as one of the conditions of being amongst the elect. We cannot therefore expect to find it common. In fact, as the light when it dazzles makes men shut their eyes, so CHRIST's Presence makes their weakness manifest, and unless they accept Him and rise to the Truth, their whole life becomes falsehood. I suppose the evidence of moral truth, as distinguishing even the worst of the



English from the native populations, has been the chief means of bringing the Hindus to have a respect for the religion of the English nation. It is very necessary that they should feel that moral truth is a prerequisite for admission as children of the supernatural Truth. Ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ is a great requirement in England. When it was first written it must have been a great demand, apparently a hopeless one. In fact the state of the Fall and the state of Regeneration are just the state of falseness and the state of truth. No falseness can be tolerated by any Christian casuistry without injuring the life of the regenerate. No truth can be steadily acted upon without leading the outcast to the acceptance of CHRIST and of His grace. The natural principle of truth is correlative to that revelation of Light of which you speak in your letter. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." If thine eye be not single, the very Light of Divine Truth is only seen, as it were, in prismatic colours, and a faulty casuistry develops a faulty theology. There is a nationality of life as well as an individuality, and we cannot expect individuals to rise out of national characteristics, even under the influence of divine grace, without long trial and suffering.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*



LXVI. *To the same.*—*The Holiness of God Unintelligible to the Heathen.*

Sept. 16, 1874.

. . . I suppose their difficulty about a mediator really arises from not recognizing the entire difference between ourselves and God—the physical impossibility of God speaking to us immediately, since our senses could not apprehend the voice of the Infinite.

One must be careful, in teaching them to pray, to let them understand that, however natural it may be for us to pray, yet our prayers want the covenanted acceptance, until we can call God really our FATHER by receiving a new life in Holy Baptism.

They should understand that they should look forward to an entire change of their nature by regeneration, that their conversion is not a mere change of opinions about God, and that their new life is a salvation from the power of sin, but that it involves much responsibility and struggle if they are to attain to final salvation amongst God's faithful and elect children at the last day.

I expect that they commonly have very little idea of the probationary, responsible character of Christian grace, and that they generally regard baptism as being either everything or else nothing. I suppose that they have no idea of holiness either in God or man. Probably it would be impossible to convey the idea to them.

THE HOLY GHOST Himself must teach it. Still He is ready to teach through us. But their idea of Deity would be simple *power*, superior to moral obligations, not elevating moral relationships with the purity of divine love. However, I speak very much in the dark, and the limits of a letter scarcely suffice to say even what I mean.

I suppose the idea of GOD as existing before creation must be a tremendous thought for them to grasp — His independence of the material world, and His formation of the moral world after His own likeness, so that He is not the highest merely of creatures, but that the highest excellence of man is only like a spark out of the changeless furnace of His Holy Being. These thoughts must be a great barrier between the Hindu mind and the Truth of CHRIST.

We should always carefully distinguish between the perfection their own devotees profess to seek for by mere asceticism, and the Christian practice of asceticism for the purpose of developing the sanctity of GOD communicated to us as His children in Baptism. S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans would draw out the difference between seeking to constitute some claim by virtue of nature, and seeking to conquer the flesh in the power of the regenerating Spirit.

LXVII. *To the same. — Extract from "On the Atlantic in December : An Epistle."*

S.S. "RICHMOND,"

Dec., 1876.

MY DEAR O'NEILL, I'll write to you in verse !  
All round me is a scene of dripping woe  
Wasting this gay saloon. My thoughts unroused  
Will freeze, like mental chilblains, if in prose.  
Upon the stilts of metre let me rise  
Above the mire of natural circumstance,  
That, minding them, I may forget myself  
And find the glow of health. To write few  
words

And pause in thought for fresh ones, suits my  
fate.

This chamber mocks incautious fluency,  
Blotting the open page with sudden showers.  
My left hand guards the page : my right hand  
scrawls !

Oh, now the lurching ! Backward am I hurled,  
And thoughts which bud upon long sentences  
Have little chance to blossom. Now the glass  
Bows to the kissing foam ; now springs surprised,  
And brings the noonday sun before my view  
Above the fleecy clouds in highest heaven.

. . . . .

So swells the sea before us as we go,  
Yet on we go, for all this pomp of wrath :  
And as we stand to watch, in constant change,  
Both small and vast, the waters rise and fall.

E'en so life's terrors fluctuatingly rise,  
Nor must we let the thought of fear condense  
Before our mental eye the massive forms  
Of apprehended danger. Those dread forms  
Subside, and rise anew, and sink again.  
Earth's dangers are not longer-lived in truth  
Than those of water : nations rise in rage,  
But onward goes the individual life,  
And social combinations pass away.  
The life which is true life abides unharmed,  
If we are steadfast : and the Church of God  
Bears us triumphant, if we will but trust.  
She may lose many a mast in many a storm,  
But, this we know, she'll bear us to the port.  
A formless moisture fills the void of heaven  
With darkness far ahead : we lose all sight :  
The skies and lower waters flow confused,  
And the dark heaven in gloom withdraws from  
sight  
The outline of the future. Yet come on !  
Storms must not break, nor fogs becloud, the  
heart :  
Faith still looks back to triumphs of the past,  
Triumphs which shall be won full oft again.  
Safely the Church has weathered many a storm :  
The thought of earlier days forbids all fear,  
Whate'er the struggle be which yet awaits  
In earth's last years. Men are not weaker now  
Than martyrs were of old. What God did then  
He will do now by us if we be true.

R. M. B.

LXVIII. *To the same.—Peace and Strength after Trial—Intellectual Temptations.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 27, 1880.

I reached home this morning, having arrived at Liverpool just before midnight. I left behind me the two postulants, my companions, to follow by the day train. . . . I had a very pleasant voyage as far as the serenity of seasons could constitute pleasure, and a higher pleasure in studying the Epistle to the Hebrews, getting a good part written of what I have long purposed to be the second volume of *Bible Teachings*. I think what surprises me most, as one studies it time after time, is the utter failure of any expositors that I have ever seen to follow the Apostle's argument from section to section. Oh, if we did but realize the Church of God as the heavenly temple wherein JESUS is ministering at the right hand of GOD! Then one might indeed feel oneself with the LORD—whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, but in the communion of saints, in the unity of the indissoluble Body of CHRIST, in the truth of His Humanity, in the spiritual glory of His Godhead, in the security of His promises, and in the fellowship of His Sonship. The miserable controversies of Christendom die upon the ear, if we have an ear not to listen to what man says, but to that which the SPIRIT thus saith to the Churches. Controversies, corruptions,

schisms, violence, fraud, all these are for a time : happy they who are deaf to them, and abide devoutly in the Light of the LORD.

It was an unspeakable relief to me to read your letters, which I found awaiting my arrival. Candidly, your telegram frightened me.<sup>1</sup> I could not tell which way to read it. There are two ends to troubles. One is the stupefaction of darkness of the stunned or sorrowing soul. The other is the joyous energy of divine light in which the Life of God brightly and calmly cheers the eye that looks up to Him with the meekness of faith. Read in the colouring of letters which I had received up to that date, it seemed to me to be gloomy, but now, as I learn its full meaning, indeed I rejoice. God, Who makes us to triumph over all the wiles of the enemy, will make this experience to be a real strength to you for the time to come. We must always take care not merely to return to what we were, and to fresh frights, but to come forth from such struggles of the night season with a changed name, that is, with a character raised to higher perfection of spiritual strength as the Israel of God. Greater even than the change whereby we may give ourselves up to be slaves of the enemy, wearying in the strife, is that other change whereby we are taken up from such spiritual struggles to be transformed with renewed power,

<sup>1</sup> The telegram was "Found peace." This ambiguous expression had caused Father Benson some anxiety till he was reassured by the letter which followed later.



and perfected for higher acts of spiritual warfare. GOD intends us by all such modes of discipline to be perfected, as our great Captain was perfected, through suffering.

Oh, the delusion of people who can think that we are to be perfected by pamphlets, by getting some new view of some obscure expression, which would mean nothing unless some special colouring were thrown upon it by some rhetorical artifice of the inclination. The will can constrain the reason with its earthly postulates. It is the Spirit of GOD Who alone can illuminate the reason. He is with us, the personal Principle of unity and truth and life to all the members of CHRIST.

Our experiences must lead us to realize His fellowship more and more. He is the LORD Who will "direct our hearts into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST," whereas human reasonings drive us into rebellion against GOD's providential discipline, and impatience because CHRIST is not as apparent to our sight as seems to us to be necessary.

Reason demands much certainty, as if we must know the LORD by some external authority, so as to base our religion upon natural certitude. Faith rejoices in the Love of GOD so much vaster than our knowledge of Him; and the covenant of the LORD "hath this seal, The LORD knoweth them that are His." Oh, yes! as the Apostle says, "to know Him, or rather to be known of Him!" We know Him not until we know our own knowledge of Him to be simply the loving reflection of

that loving knowledge whereby He knows us. People argue about minute points of proof and get utterly bewildered, because they think that love will spring out of knowledge, instead of perceiving that knowledge can only spring up with love.

In the Eternal Trinity the SON, the Wisdom, is begotten in the unity of the HOLY GHOST, the Love of the FATHER ; and the HOLY GHOST, the Love, proceeds from the SON, the Wisdom, but is not begotten of the SON. So is it with our spiritual life. Controversy kills divine truth, extinguishes the light wherewith it shines, in order to be able to subject the dead material to the processes of its own logic. Blessed is that logic which by the illumination of the Spirit sees divine realities in earthly forms, but cursed is that logic which seeks to bring CHRIST down again from above, and subject the covenant of the Eternal with the Church as the glorified Body of His SON, to the necessary measurements of human reason, forgetting that, even in its earthly processes, it has to recognize the asymptotes and impossible quantities ; whereas if it stopped until it had made asymptotes meet, and had explained the impossible quantities which it has to handle, it would have to hold aloof from all higher knowledge.

Oh ! we have much to disappoint us in the Church of God. Its history is sweet to the mouth of expectation, but bitter to the belly of experience. So it always was. The prophets of the olden time prophesied of defeat for God's

people. It was the false prophets who told of glory being imminent. Until we have learnt to accept the outward overthrow of expectation with joyful serenity of patient faith, we cannot be worthy of our portion with the Saints.

Weakness and defect are not certain evidences of truth ; but strength and triumph, if continually developing for a long period of time, are almost of themselves a certain evidence of falsehood. Especially when we find that those who are thus prospering in the world make their worldly success the great aim, the proud argument, the necessary standpoint of their being.

We must get rid of the idea of a great ecclesiastical worldly empire if we are to live through the troubles of the last days. We must be content to see the Church perish upon the earth, before we have any right to say that we are sure that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. If we are to welcome her coming down from heaven, we must not expect that all the earth will be called by her name. We must be hated, not because our religion identifies us with a strong historical temporal power that has often been noted for violence, but hated and despised as witnesses to CHRIST Whom the world understandeth not, " while they daily say unto us " with taunting reproach, " Where is now thy God ? " He is in my heart, and I am in Him. Earth may pass away, but His love will never fail. As faith decays around, and the oppression of the world is strong, we may be scattered, without cohesion,

without organization ; but, if so, it is because God will give us quickly in Himself the manifestation of unity, of life, and of glory. This is what must be before the end, or rather at the end ; and in the discipline of years we have to experience in various minor ways the growing features of the struggle with darkness. But just in proportion as we are called to this experience, so will be our illumination by grace. God never gives us any trial merely to trouble us, but for the sake of the grace which He therein would give.

We must feel just the same about intellectual temptations as about sensual temptations. We must not admit the delectation of trifling with worldly hopes and carnal reasonings. We must cut off the very beginnings, live in God's love, and God will teach. To doubt the reality of our past experiences of His love is itself a sin. We cannot develop them ; God can. Their development must not be towards earth, but towards heaven. We must shrink from any development which does not bring along with it an increasing consciousness of personal, organic, vital, active union with Jesus at the right hand of God. Our own individual life must be developed by the Church's development, not crushed by it. This is the great difference between Catholic development round the throne of Jesus by the power of the HOLY GHOST, and development round an earthly centre of unity.

. . . . .

I am very glad that you were frank with the

bishop. God has blessed you for this frankness. We ought not to speak of our inward difficulties to every one, but under the circumstances the bishop had a right to know. We should always deal in thorough openness with those who are over us in the LORD, if they meet us in the same spirit; and your bishop has always shown such frankness and trustfulness to us, as working in the power of the HOLY GHOST together.

You will find this experience help you to rise to the spiritual energies of the devotional life in your solitary outpost. I have often told you that you must look to kindle a fire around you by cherishing a prayerful life of simple faith, waiting for God in the midst of the heathen.

After some years the result will come. The astrologers of the East watched through years for the star of Jacob. What prayerful, faithful watchers they were! We watch, not for a star, but for the more glorious sign of the Son of Man. "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength." You have now had some years of watching; let each new year be increasingly prayerful. If so, it may be very soon now that converts will be coming to the Light, and kings to the brightness of His rising. But do not trouble yourself with pamphleteering questions.

As missionaries, the chief thing is for our own souls to be fixed upon the contemplation of God in holy love. He will not fail to show Himself to you, in you, around you; but unless He



shows Himself thus in supernatural devotion, He cannot show Himself to any one by natural arts of persuasion.

GOD bless you and grant you your heart's desire, and fulfil all your mind, and raise your mind to the glory of His own mind, that your life may indeed fulfil all His good pleasure.

LXIX. *To the same.—On the Unity of the Church.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 19, 1881.

I had not caught the purpose of your definition. It seems to me a very happy one; only I should say *Unity* rather than *Union*. Dead force may be united with dead form. It is living force generating its own form, as the expression of its vitality, which really lives. It has life in itself. Union is what people are so apt to mistake for Unity. In fact the mistake occurs in our prayer being designated "For the Unity of Christendom." The Unity of Christendom has never been destroyed, although the Union of Christendom has been disturbed. Yet we still believe in One Holy Catholic Church. A force which generates its own form proceeds through that form to act. Every created force has a form of self-development included within the original indivisible germ of its being. The spiritual energy which originates life needs not the dimensions of



space, as does the material nature which it quickens. Those dimensions of space are very likely merely phenomenal media of apprehension for our bodily organs. The spirit, form, principle, develops itself in space, through the intervention of matter, in the unity of its own life.

We are full of parochial events just now. Friday, Confirmation, 104 candidates ; Saturday, S. Vincent's Guild anniversary in the Girls' Schoolroom ; Monday, S. Agnes' Guild ; Tuesday, Parochial Tea chiefly to promote interest in the new Church.<sup>1</sup>

Delightful division of Mankind—*Seculars*, people who give money ; *Religious*, people who spend it ! Thank you !! I am afraid all the world will become *Religious*, and when there is no one to give, what will become of the *Religious* ? Love to Father Goreh. God bless you both.

LXX. *To the same.*—*The Brahma Samaj.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Feast of S. John, Dec. 27, 1881.*

. . . We are all in Retreat. *All* includes our Brahma friend.<sup>2</sup> He comes to most of the addresses. In fact his life in this house is a perpetual Retreat. He lives in his cell, and

<sup>1</sup> The Parish Church, S. Mary and S. John.

<sup>2</sup> A member of the Brahma Samaj who paid a long visit to the Mission House in order to study Christianity.

comes out only for meals, Chapel, and Church. One cannot think that God will let his earnest prayers for light remain unanswered. He may have hard struggles to go through ere he attain to the truth, but I feel little doubt of his becoming a Christian in the end ; and if he does accept the faith he will accept it very intelligently.

He is delighted with reading S. Augustine *On the Trinity*, and Christlieb's *Modern Doubt*. He is translating à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* into Bengali. This I have given him to do as a sort of work, for he does not like to stay here and be an expense to us. He is terribly alarmed at the expense of food and clothing in England !

Your lecture to the Brahmos has just arrived : I think it will be helpful to our guest. I am rather anxious for him when he sees that he must break with Keshab Chandar Sen if he is to join himself to CHRIST. At present I rather think his idea is to take all Christian doctrine into the Samaj. I am careful not to precipitate the discovery.

Thank you for your interesting letter from Jeypore. I certainly never thought of dating the Millennium from the Hejira. However, I do not mind where it is put as long as people put it into the past, and keep the future clear for the Sabbatism of joy which has no end.

. . . As to Brahmoism, I do not think I could have spoken quite so tenderly as you do in your lecture. But it is well to be tender. The chief evil seems to be their special doctrine of immediate communion between the soul and God. Inter-

course with them makes one realize more than before what was our LORD's view of Nicodemus. He had no idea of the necessity of being born again in order to understand. They, alas! understand so much, that they cannot see the necessity of regeneration in order to know anything as they ought to know. They must learn the incapacity of human nature, before they can accept the truth of GOD. You give a hint as to their not sufficiently estimating sin. They need to learn their sinful estate, as children of wrath, needing CHRIST, not merely as a Teacher, but as a Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour. I hope that our friend here has a considerable sense of sin, but, I expect, *not* derived from Brahmo teaching.

LXXI. *To the same.*—*Church Synods.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 13, 1882.

I am very glad that the bishop's visitation went off so well. The difficulties of a synod in India would, I should fear, be almost greater than those of an Ecumencial Council. But I suppose they may be vanquished. The Church needs to get into the swing of corporate action before it can do any real work as a Church. An unsynodical Church is a drag upon the individual priest; whereas the individual ought to find the whole body of the Church around him a treasury of power, and a sustaining principle of motion.

My good Brahmo friend has been quite a

refreshment to me. I can feel no doubt of his becoming a Christian, and, perhaps, therefore all the more I am very careful not to press him. The beauty of Christianity is an intense delight to him. He had no knowledge of its beauty of detail until he began to study it. I hope his appreciation will shortly change the word beauty for necessity. I want him to say, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

LXXII. *To the same.—On Preaching through an Interpreter.*

S. LUKE'S, MANCHESTER,

Feb. 15, 1882.

Thank you for your letter from Tuticorin. It is very interesting to hear of what is going on in the various parts. I hope your Mission in Tinnevely has been blessed. We know God's blessing goes along with us, and the hesitation of an interpreter will not stop it. The effect, of course, may be very different, but I expect in some ways the message gains power. There is a sense of importance about anything that is communicated with effort. How one feels it in speaking to a deaf person who wants to know what some trivial remark is. So doubtless the audience are all the more anxious to hear what has to be repeated to them by the interpreter. And the pause will, I suppose, make one more thoughtful and prayerful as to what one says.

The excitement of continuous speech sometimes, I fear, carries one away.

I saw Green yesterday in Lancaster Castle. I did not like to go so far North without going to see him, but it is a place difficult of access. I left at 6.15 a.m. and found him just engaged receiving Holy Communion from the Vicar of the Parish; but I had three quarters of an hour with him, left at 10.40, and got back in time for a class of women in the afternoon.

LXXIII. *To the same.—Passiontide.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Maundy Thursday, 1882.*

. . . We are terribly scattered just now. The applications for Good Friday preachers have been very numerous. One must be very thankful, for it shows how the services on Good Friday are deepening. And when the sense of need is awakened the supply will come. Perhaps there is nothing more awakening than the sense of hunger, and so the desire to hear—the famine longing for the word of God—may be one of the best preachers of that which no human tongue, however eloquent, can picture.

We are just preparing for our watch-night. When this letter reaches you Easter will be far advanced. Our life on earth should be indeed

one long-continued watch-night of the Passion. If we knew our exile in its reality, it could be nothing else. But how soon it will be past! Yes, the Psalmist himself says, "As a watch in the night." How strange it will be to look back upon it when the full day of the eternal Love is shining in its bright manifestation all around. How contemptuously shall we look back on many things which, as time went on, we fancied to be important for God's glory, and we shall see how we measured things by our own self-love, rather than by devotion to Him. If we had been more dead to this world while living in it, we should not have set so much store by them; we should have seen how everything was nothing, except what came from Him, that wherein He Himself came.

Oh, that we could know our only purpose in life to be the identification of ourselves with His Passion, while the world takes a religious form in honour of Him. To rise out of His Passion, by passing through it, is the stern reality of loving fellowship wherein He calls us to be associated with Himself—a real passing through it, and so away from the present world, and right onward into the glory of His throne at God's right hand.

When one considers the variety of circumstances under which God is worshipped upon earth, how strange it is to think of all these varieties of the human race coalescing in the glory of the great Easter, all visibly living with



one life, and ruled by one Head and Heart. Your Indian travels must bring this very much home to you. Within that great peninsula what vast varieties of human material there are out of which the Kingdom of CHRIST is to be formed.

GOD bless you and Father Goreh.

LXXIV. *To the same.—Proofs of Christianity.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 28, 1882.*

. . . I quite agree with what you say about the evils of letting the technical proofs of Christianity absorb us too much. But they are none the less to be valued in their way, even if they are kept in a subordinate position. So our LORD speaks of the testimony of Scripture to Himself: "These are they which testify of Me; but ye will not come to Me that ye may have Life." The testimony cannot give the Life, and so the testimony cannot give Light, "for the Life is the Light of men." People cannot really see the beauty of CHRIST until they have passed beyond controversy. Even in controversy we ought always to feel that we are stooping down to write upon the ground. The real knowledge of the truth is that joyous knowledge which we can only have when we look up and see CHRIST, or rather when we look inward and see CHRIST.

To us upward means inward : for the higher world is that glorified existence of the Great Mediator Who stands to us in the relation, not of an apex to a triangle, but of a central point of power to the solid sphere which feels its motions, Himself "unmoved, all motion's Source"—by creative power in the outer world, by mediatorial grace in the sphere of supernatural life. People have so little notion of the real Presence of CHRIST within them as the basis of all sanctity, just as the personal Presence of the Spirit of CHRIST within them is the active principle of all sanctity. They want the outer nature, the old man, to become what the inner nature, the new man, is ; instead of seeking to have the new man developed within them both in body and mind, so that the old man may at length be conquered and elevated thereby. If we do not recognize this double humanity belonging to us, we must always be oppressed by the old corrupt nature, or else we shall be liable to treat its infirmities with a fatal indifference. Few, alas ! recognize the personal Presence of the HOLY GHOST dwelling, as He does, undividedly with the whole Church, and completely with each individual. But fewer recognize that mediatorial Presence whereby the HOLY GHOST reveals CHRIST within us, and takes us into the Body of CHRIST, not primarily sanctifying our members, but primarily gathering us into Him, that we may eventually be sanctified by the substitution of His renewing Humanity to take the place of

our decayed humanity—a process of continual transformation. That perfect Humanity gives the HOLY GHOST a perfect power of operating within us, whereas our outer and corrupt humanity needs to be mortified in order that it may not impede the outward manifestation of that work of the Spirit.

GOD bless you all. I am glad that —— is coming to be trained for the priesthood. It will be a work of much interest to you.

LXXV. *To the same.—A Missionary Plan discussed.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Ascension Day, 1882.*

I am very glad that you are apparently making satisfactory progress in the revision of the Psalms. Probably it will need going over a good many times before you get it done so as to satisfy you. But it is a work at which one can never labour without an infinite joy. The endeavour to find some expression in another language helps one more than anything to sound the depths of the inspired original.

Bishop Steere has been in Oxford lately. We had a most interesting missionary meeting in Brasenose College on Sunday evening, at the close of which all went to a missionary service in the chapel. It is wonderful how Mohammedanism has been absolutely extinguished in a

large part of the eastern coast of Africa, although it boasts that it is spreading in some places. That mission is a great trophy of persevering faith. When Bishop Steere went out to his diocese he found himself without a single priest, as all were laid low by death. Now he has fourteen stations. I was specially led to speak of him because of your revision work. You may have heard of him revising the Swaheli Version. He spoke of the New Testament as completed, although he did not tell us who had done it, and that several of the books of the Old Testament are coming out in succession as they are ready.

I do not quite understand your scheme of combined missions. Doubtless there are many individuals getting nearly ripe for conversion. I must say I very much doubt the desirableness of urging them on by a process of excitement. If the work is of the Spirit of God it is sure to go on in their hearts. A little over-pressure may kill it. I do not, as I say, quite understand your proposal, but I will put down what seem to me to be reasons against it.

1. Our own work. We have not the men to spare for such long absence from either of our stations. We shall now have three which will require to be kept manned. I believe that a quiet, prayerful life at Indore is vastly more powerful than any such journeying could be. The effect upon his own neighbourhood of a Christian priest's poor home is lost, and I do not

think any compensating gain would be found in the cities which he visits.

2. It is very well for us to go where we are *invited*, but we ought for many reasons, human and divine, to abstain from offering ourselves where we are not asked ; human, because such offer is likely to be mistaken for self-conceit, interference, disparagement of work already done ; divine, because we ought to wait for God to show by some call what He wants us to do, otherwise our work is not the work of faith, but of venture.

3. A good deal like the last. An endeavour to gather various missionaries together under our standard or guidance, however nominal, even though we were merely the leaders of the movement exerting no control, would be resented by *many*, though welcomed by some. It would irritate the committees at home. It would prevent our doing much good, which we might in many cases be asked to do. The more unobtrusive we are the more powerful we are. An appearance of putting ourselves forward would be resented (and justly) by many older missionaries, who have borne the brunt of a harder and longer battle than we have had yet to bear in India.

4. Does *combination* mean several going to one city ? If so we should not get through the cities of India in the cold weather. It would be a progress occupying many years. If individual missionaries went to as many cities, I do not see the advantage of combination.



5. I should feel that men were being taken away from work for what would be little more than amusement, although no doubt in some cases good might come of it. Why should a Hindu accept Christianity in compliance with a month's preaching? I could not wish any one to do so. Devout Hindus would keep out of your way. Such a progress would be altogether unlike any journey of S. Paul's. The cities of Asia Minor and Greece were prepared to receive him by the Jewish settlers. Devout souls longed for the God of Israel. Their own religion was utterly valueless. In India devout souls feel that there is a power in their religion, feel it and show it. Instead of respecting Christianity as the fulfilment of prophecy, they only know enough of Christians to make them think scorn of their religion. Tinnevely had been prepared by a good half-century of self-denying work throughout the district. We must think of looking down from Paradise upon Indore fifty years hence, if the world lasts so long.

6. I believe Indian missionaries are getting generally to feel that bazar preaching is of next to no good. Our LORD and the Apostles never carried on a system of what we should nowadays call outdoor preaching. Of course in accordance with the habits of the country their congregations were often physically out-of-doors, but they never preached to haphazard assemblies. Those to whom our LORD preached came after Him, as I feel assured crowds would in due time come after



a Christian ascetic known to be settled among them. Reserve preaches much more effectually than parade of any kind.

7. Supposing many did come forward, what would you propose to do with them? You would have, I suppose, to carry them off to some distant college, for in all probability they would not have the means of self-support amid their Hindu relatives.

8. Still more. How is their spiritual condition to be provided for, unless there is an active mission permanently there?

9. I do not understand how the Religious Life could be maintained during such a progress. It could only be done in name. Such a progress might be prayerful and poor, but technically *Religious* I do not think it could be. It would, I fear, rather draw away the heart from the seclusion of cloistered communion with God—and that is what we have to cherish as the heavenly fire by which the altar of Indian Missions is to be kindled. I often wish I could find myself in some lonely spot of Hindu surroundings where no English postman could ever find me out.

Your plan may be formed so as to obviate these difficulties, but I put down what occurs to me on first reading what you say.

LXXVI. *To the same.—Necessity of a Solid Foundation for Converts.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
June 15, 1882.

. . . It is very important that the Brahmos should be thoroughly Christian in purpose before being baptized. Otherwise their whole religious system is liable to collapse. We see the workmen digging out the vast foundations for our church,<sup>1</sup> and filling them with concrete. That is a great parable to ourselves in our spiritual work. Digging down to build upon the rock is not merely touching the solid, but excavating the unsolid. A Christianizing devotion does not suffice. Our good Brahmo<sup>2</sup> is very much at a standstill at present. His avowed difficulty is the existence of a personal devil, or rather of angels. I think it has been elicited by considerations of friendship for those whom he leaves; but of course this difficulty would have been there, and he might have slurred it over. I can quite understand how——and his friend may need a great deal of underdigging and underpropping in order to make their Christian position secure.

LXXVII. *To the same.—The Hindu Mind.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Feast of S. Peter, 1882.

. . . I am not surprised to hear of the Brahmo convert being baptized and remaining

<sup>1</sup> The Parish Church, SS. Mary and John, Cowley Road.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 149, Note 2.

pretty much what he was. Their imaginative piety and mysticism accept certain features of Christianity without at all grasping Him Who is the Truth. The want of historical co-ordination to determine the chronology of the Incarnation, and the truth of prophecy, leaves the Hindu mind so much at sea.

I am thankful to say that *our* Brahmo has got some difficulties in the way of accepting Christianity. I am sure it will be much better than if he had come in smoothly, as he once seemed to be sailing. His difficulty is the personal existence of angels and of the devil. He had always treated them as metaphors. It is very much as if a man seeing rocks underneath the water had thought them to be reflections of the sky, and suddenly found out their dangerous reality.

LXXVIII. *To the same.—The Power of a Hidden Life in the Missionary.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

July 6, 1882.

. . . May God, Who has called you to such a life of devotion and prayer, enable you to see with your own eyes the glorious work which He is about to do for India. We know not when the time of the evening sacrifice will come, but I think it cannot be long. I quite agree with you that we must do our duty if we are to look for God's benediction on our work ; but I

think we are much more likely to bring God's truth home to the Hindu mind by the repose of devout retirement than by the eagerness of proclamation in the bazars. Modern Europe and America delight in self-assertion. I do not know that they are on that account more likely to receive truth. But without it there may be difficulty in getting listeners, and we have the Church system into which they can be drafted.

The Hindu has his own truer conceptions of reverence. The Indian people take knowledge of any devotee in their neighbourhood, and are sure in due time to gain a reverence for him. If this is the case with their own false worship, surely a Christian devotee ought to be a much greater power in the midst of them. If they see that we are not taking part in the ordinary society of our fellow countrymen, they begin to find that we are dedicated to God. They then get a desire to know something about us. All of this takes time ; but I feel sure that a few gathered in by such means at the end of ten or fifteen years would be worth ever so many thousands addressed in bazars. In fact the really religious Hindus have such a horror of us, that we do not get them among our hearers. It would be a great thing to outlive the prejudices of the religious people in any neighbourhood, so that they might be able to say at last, "Well, the English must have some religion, for there is Father — who has been all these years living here, and he can have no other purpose than the glory of God."

People who come in this way are likely to be influenced on behalf of CHRIST ; but I must candidly confess I should distrust any who gave in their allegiance as the result of a preaching tour, except among quite the lowest tribes. In fact I should feel that the very arguments I used would not be enough to convince *me* if I were in the place of my hearers. With European, Greek, and Hebrew knowledge of history and prophecy, I have the means of determining the truth of Christianity ; but the arguments I should put forward as the only ones fitted to persuade the casual Hindu would be felt by me to be inadequate.

It may be well—possibly it is not well—to gather in converts ; but a large number of converts coming in without sufficient knowledge of why they should come, would, I am sure, be more hindrance than help—a burden to look after—and at best, when the coffer comes to be opened, we should find that it contained nothing but stones.

But certainly I could not recommend mere idle waiting upon Providence. Prayerful watching for Providence, and careful using of all the opportunities which Providence gives, are sure to be accepted and blest of God.

LXXIX. *To the same.—On the same subject.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*July 14, 1882.*

. . . One is sorry for all who turn back, but we must be prepared to have a series of such failures. I am glad the blind man went off before his baptism, and not afterwards.

I cannot help feeling that a retired life, such as that of a Sannyasi, is the way to draw all men after us—at least, to draw those that shall be saved. In public preaching we are apt to meet those who are inclined to scoff. The devout stand aloof. Our hearers are men who need to be “converted” every way. The devout will be led to inquire into the aims and teachings of a devotee. But, above all, a life retired from men, and devoted to prayer, brings round about us the power of God. The law of the Church’s growth is, “No man can come to Me except the FATHER draw him.” A hidden life of prayer to GOD will, I am sure, attract more souls capable of salvation, than a public life of lecturing on behalf of GOD. I think there is very little use in getting hold of a number of men who are not good Hindus, under the hope that they will be good Christians. I do not know *how* such a life can be adopted, but Christianity will not make much way without it. “Not by power” of intellect, “but by My Spirit, saith the LORD.”

I am glad — has been to see you. I



wish he had more care for what is worth caring for. The fetters of London society are quite as bad as any that Hinduism has, to hold people back from the Cross.

LXXX. *Extracts from Letters to Father O'Neill.*

*Wakeful nights.* As for the mode of spending wakeful nights, it is difficult to advise. Sometimes the bodily state is so restless during a wakeful night that it is impossible to give the mind to continued devotion. Sometimes a little quiet reading may be the means of tranquillizing oneself for sleep. Of course you ought generally on such occasions to try and get to sleep. It would not do to turn those times of nervousness into vigils for spiritual purposes. The frame wants sleep all the more because it rejects it. . . . If you are able to turn such waking times to account, whether for linguistic or spiritual purposes, well and good. The simple reading of the Scripture, not for study, but as having a sacramental power to soothe the soul, may bring much comfort, and it tends imperceptibly to form the thinking habits according to the mind of God, so that it is very profitable.

*Meeting of Brethren.* You have probably ere this (June, 1874) had a visit from Father Page. I quite like to think of your meeting. It will, I am sure, be such a joy to you both, and one of those

spiritual joys which the Superior of a Community may really delight to share with his sons—a joy which lasts on beyond the time of meeting. Each house of the Community is like a fresh utterance of the HOLY GHOST calling us to rejoice—Oh yes, not the less because each has its own special difficulties. The Voice of the HOLY GHOST never speaks externally except through the trumpet of difficulties. We must bear all in brave and holy love.

*Mortification.* As for “doing much for” the heathen, it is GOD Who must do all for them ; but we must wait upon GOD and grow in grace, so that in due time our Society may be fruitful for the healing of the Indian nation. We cannot look for a crop of oranges on the tree when it is only just sown. The first thing necessary is for the seed to die, as S. Paul phrases it. We must be content to have the first results in our own mortification. I do not think, therefore, your removal from Bankipore matters as far as the work is concerned. I doubt not your sickness and the other trials there will have been blest to you and helpful to the work in the end.

*Christian Asceticism.* In teaching the Hindus we should always carefully distinguish between the perfection which their own devotees profess to seek for by mere asceticism, and the Christian practice of asceticism for the purpose of developing the sanctity of GOD communicated to us as His

children in Baptism. S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans would draw out the difference between seeking to constitute some claim with God by works of nature, and seeking to conquer the flesh in the power of the regenerating Spirit.

*What a Xavier is.* Your Irish friend said that Xaviers were wanted. They ought not to be difficult to procure. For what was Xavier but a man working with God? And we know that God is willing and ready to work with all who seek Him truly. And if God be the same to all, it can matter little what the man is who is joined with Him. God and any man will make a Xavier. What an entire taking of us out of ourselves is involved in the thought of being fellow-workers with God. It develops both the responsibility and the nothingness of our human position.

*On Father O'Neill's settling at Indore.* Sept. 16, 1875. I have your telegram. May God bless you in the work at Indore! It seems as if you had been hitherto following on and asking the question, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" For surely that is only another form of the question, "Where wilt Thou have me to be?" And now you have the answer, "Come and see." It is difficult for us to realize Jesus dwelling where nothing else but heathenism is seen, and yet we cannot see where Jesus dwells unless we dwell in the future, as a present already realized. We

must come up to heaven, then we see that which shall be hereafter. If we hold Him Who is the Head, we have, indeed, all the predestined future as our portion to be enjoyed even now—for He is Himself all to us, our all-sufficing Portion, containing all that our hearts can desire. Yes, we find the emptiness of earth a joy, because it opens our hearts to possess Him.

*Prayer with Dissenters.* I do not see any harm in praying with Dissenters as lay-Christians. Of course one must not recognize any sort of mission in their ministers, although one would pay them respect as men often of much religious experience. They are not for the most part schismatics, although in schism, for they do not know what schism means. They are the victims of circumstances. They do not even claim a ministry in the proper sense of the word. Their position is rather that of Apollos when he first arrived.

*Misapprehension of Others.* . . . How people of opposite schools among ourselves regard writers as shallow, or cold, or unreal! whereas the appearance of shallowness, coldness, unreality is because they do not read and regard those opposite writers or preachers from their own standpoints. The human mind is like the bed of a river, having its shadows and depths, its banks and its holes. It is not like a canal. The divine character of Christianity is manifest in this more than in anything—that it is Catholic

not by uniformity, but by universal adaptability. It lives in, and gives life to, all kinds of minds and hearts. All sects which would humanize Christianity, beginning with the great Western Church, and going on to every little Puritan fanatic however insignificant, just agree in this, "I am Catholicity, and all must be measured by me."

*How Souls are Won.* You will need constantly to have at heart that text, "No man can come unto Me except the FATHER which hath sent Me draw him." It is not men drawn by eloquence or learning or music or ritual or influence, who make solid Christians—"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts"—it is souls really won out of the grasp of Satan by prayer. These must be our crown of rejoicing. All else are flowers that fade.

*Holy Poverty.* I should very much deprecate the idea of building or even renting "a good house." The poorer one's place of lodgement the better. The less one is like an ordinary English gentleman the better. . . . I should not have more things with me than I could pack up in two hours, a chamber where one could sleep either in it, or on the roof, and a portable altar in the corner. . . . A chapel one would not want for years, for I should not admit any natives to services before they were Christians. The great thing is to let them know that a prophet of God



is there. . . . Then I would very much urge not using pictures. They belong to a developed Christianity, and may be helpful to keep up a decaying Christianity, but an infant Christianity requires to be shielded from the debasing mythology which pictures almost necessarily involve. They make it difficult for people to get heavenly ideas of things.

*Printed Instructions.* I would not have you in any hurry about the Catechism. Talk is far better than print. A religion on paper is but a painted fire. We do not need so much to make them understand that *this* is true, but rather to feel in their hearts "*God* is true, and *I* must be true." This love of the Truth must be developed in them before it is any use for them to know the formularies of the Truth. The Truth of the New Testament is a very different thing from the Truth as conceived by modern divines. The one is but the law; the other is the very King.

LXXXI. *To Father Rivington.*

Jan. 8, 1875 (1.15 a.m.).

MY DEAR FATHER RIVINGTON,

My love to you. Is that worth a shilling; or, rather, is saying it worth a shilling? I cannot say much more, for my candle is getting near its



close—the very opposite of true love, which always seems to be only just beginning.

I am going to celebrate at the Home at 7, and shall remember you there instead of writing a longer letter to Bombay. Holy Communion is, indeed, our best link of communication. We meet there, though unseen to each other, in the very strength and glory of God. Perhaps you are celebrating at this very moment. "The LORD perform all thy petitions, send thee help from His sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion." A few days will bring a letter with the account of your arrival. I hope Father Page is better. He must take care of himself, and, in this respect, show you that he practises the obedience which he hopes to receive from you.

The spiritual atmosphere of the present day is so charged on every side with elements of power and tendencies to new combination, that one feels as if any one, or any thing, may effect any result anywhere. The mighty unseen Hand is holding all things in His power. Chief priests and scribes may interpret God's Word with cold, unloving hearts, but they cannot hinder the Child Jesus being made known to those who are really watching for Him—whether waiting for redemption in Israel, or lifting up their eyes from afar. . . . You will wonder how I could write so much. I found my candle was capable of being shoved up, so that the imminent conflagration of paper which I dreaded has not taken place yet. Now it soon will—a symbol of things which we

dread. Yes, and not only may dreaded things be yet a long way off, but also that which is now the light will soon be the cause of conflagration to this dirty paper world in which we live. But that conflagration shall be coincident with the fulness of the eternal day. When the candle no longer shines on earth the Sun of Righteousness will shine from heaven in His personal manifestation. Much love to Father Page. God bless and keep you both.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,  
*Sup.*

LXXXII. *To the same.—On the Death of his Brother.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Feb. 12, 1875.*

Your brother's death has, of course, been a great shock to your family, coming so suddenly as it did. I am very glad that he was with you at the last before you left home. I did not allude to him in my last letter, although I had heard of his death accidentally, because I did not wish you to get the news of it unexpectedly in a letter from me, and I had no means of telling you any of the circumstances. . . . Each one that goes from earth is a fresh call to detachment. It is the blessedness of our Religious Life that we have already died to all that are upon the earth, and our portion is much more with those that are at rest than with those that are struggling.

And yet none have such a struggle as we have. The world cannot even realize what our struggle is. But in our struggle our true strength is to be restful, buried with CHRIST, abiding in GOD, that Satan may do what he will, but may find us unmoved. Our triumph is tested by what we are able to endure. The blows which Satan strikes upon us, if we can but remain firm, open out fissures, as it were, in our earthly nature through which the divine light of the interior life flashes out to his overthrow. We must remember this especially in our missionary work—that the strongholds of Satan are overthrown by the outflashings of holiness awakened by his assaults, when they are borne in the power of faith, much more than by any efforts which we can make on behalf of GOD by any natural gifts.

I hope your conferences at the Cathedral will be very much blessed. Whether there are many to come to them or no matters little. Those will come whom the FATHER draws. Others may come in shoals, but all to no profit. We should seek always to realize that the FATHER Who sent us forth knows exactly to whom He is sending us. We shall remember you constantly in our prayers.

LXXXIII. *To the same.—An Indian Puritan Sect.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
May 19, 1876.

Last week I was present at a very interesting lecture by Monier Williams upon what he called

*A Puritan Sect of Northern India*—the Sherami Marayans. Bishop Heber met their founder. Now they are 200,000 in number, although at present limited to the North-West. He said they were not even known by name in many parts of India, but were spreading rapidly. Their original purpose was to reform Hinduism upon ascetic principles, and they are a reaction against the gross immoralities of the dominant sect of Shivites. Now their founder is worshipped as an incarnation. It was a most remarkable scene which he described—ten thousand men assembled in a quadrangle something like Tom Quad with a temple in the middle, but the Maharajah of the sect having them in entire control, and making a lane for the Englishmen to inspect the temple before the eager crowd attempted to come in. Monier Williams said that these sects constantly rise up by way of reaction, just as Buddhism itself did ; but then, for the most part, after a time they relapse and die out again. I fear we cannot take this as much encouragement for the spread of the true faith. Half-truths spread easily, for the human mind takes them in with a certain satisfaction. . . . People have such strange notions about the rapid spread of Christianity. As if Europe was converted even now ! . . . There is a widespread twilight and dawn before the sunrise, and we must accept the divine appointment of widespread semi-Christianities before we can see the Sun of Righteousness. Sometimes, perhaps, we are apt to complain as if

these subordinate religious phases hindered the seeing of the Sun, whereas in truth the time for His rising is not come. Perhaps these semi-Christianities are, after all, like clouds which, instead of obscuring, catch the light of the unrisen sun, and help to fill the earth with glory. So I trust they may have their divine purpose, and when the fulness of time is come we shall see the Sun shining in His strength. We must be looking for Him. I fear we are far too apt to think we can do very well without Him, and come, maybe, secretly to hope that He will let us get something done before He comes. But there must be the double remembrance. When He comes, it will be a world-wide manifestation. It will need no proof. It will disclose everything. And then, "Who may abide the day of His coming?" "The day of the LORD is darkness and not light." The kingdom of CHRIST will not quietly annex the world or any part of it. Each inch must be fought over and saturated with the Life Blood of JESUS, conquering in His saints, as their blood flows with all the power that His Blood gives to it. Not a drop shall perish. Only let us be true to Its supernatural power, and let us mind and bring home to converts the power of this Blood whereby they must live and die. They must, indeed, be taught that it would not be worth while for them to be such Christians as we are—that we and they have both of us to rise to the pattern of CHRIST and His Apostles.



As for caste—you speak of Christian natives conforming outwardly. I should have imagined that this was impossible. Surely the mere profession of Christianity in any form—the being “of one Body” with Christians—would itself make them outcasts, however much they might be ready to give in to harmless conventionalities. I quite hope, when Padre Nehemiah comes to England, to get my notions of Hinduism put more into shape. There are so many points about which one has in England very confused notions. Certainly there can be no reason for unnecessary outrage of national feeling by converts doing things just to show off their Christianity. One must hold them up to S. Paul’s principle: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST, for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth”—hold them up, or rather point them on. I fear we are sadly ashamed of a religion which the natural heart of England, Europe, India, all alike, must always hate, and so we do not feel its power or find its salvation. We look to it to save us by and by when life is done, and we do not fancy it is strong enough to save us in our daily life now.



LXXXIV. *To the same.—The Value of Bishop Butler's Works in Teaching Educated Hindus.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 25, 1877.

This great Whitsuntide Festival must be the special joy of a Missionary Community like ours. And how one rejoices amidst the discrepancies of human utterance to feel that the One great Voice is speaking until He has so breathed Himself forth into our imperfections that we may attain to the true measure of His harmony, and His Voice be heard lingering on when our imperfections have passed away. So the voices of a congregation, out of tune perhaps, when heard close at hand, travel on into the distance and become purified from the discord, and only what is true survives. It is only that which the Holy Spirit of God speaks which can last.

I am sorry to hear that Butler<sup>1</sup> has been expelled from the schools, but God forced them<sup>2</sup> to keep him long enough to give you the oppor-

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the works of Bishop Butler. It would seem that some of these, including most likely the *Analogy*, were among the books included in the curriculum of the University of Bombay for which Father Rivington was helping some young men to prepare. Some change had just been made by the University authorities, and Butler excluded; but Father Benson seems to mean that in God's providence the book had retained its place in the curriculum long enough to give Father Rivington the opportunity of teaching his pupils the truth from it.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the University authorities. See note above.

tunity of getting hold of the young men. It is a special token that something was given by God when the devil takes it away. He saw its value ; but he always sees too late—too late to do us real harm, although in time enough to cause us disappointment. And then he does not see—nor do we—we cannot—how immensely we gain by our disappointments. Until we have been disappointed we cannot succeed. In fact, it is better to have one or two who come to read Butler, etc., for the sake of Truth, than ever so many who come because it will be helpful in the schools.<sup>1</sup> It is very rare for any one to profit eternally by that which profits him in time. No doubt as time goes on we ought to get as much in the midst of the Hindus as we can, but we need not be in a hurry. Here, again, the law of difficulty, diminishing numbers, and purging off popularity, is an element of success. An early spring seldom brings a fruitful harvest. What has not grown under the bracing of difficulties cannot stand the frosts which will come later on.

. . . . .

The Religious Life cannot be understood by one who has not had the call for himself. It may be admired, illustrated, enforced, encouraged, but it will not be known. To know it is to feel the irresistible impulse of a call to live accordingly. The Spirit teaches in the heart those

<sup>1</sup> "Schools," in Oxford phraseology, means the public examinations conducted by the University.

whom He calls. The great evil of later ages has been that the Religious Life has become so much more perfected intellectually than spiritually. It has become an art, rather than an inspiration. When that is the case an Order ceases to be truly Religious, however estimable.

LXXXV. *To the same.—Opposition in Mission Work  
—Missions in China.*

CUDDESDON,

May 27, 1875.

I suppose you are now on mission at Ootacamund. I hope that the bishop's fears for your health have not been realized, and that you are getting well through it both physically and spiritually, with benefit both to yourself and to those that hear you. I shall not be much distressed if you are stopped from doing anything more in the Diocese of Madras. The time will come when we shall be welcome there. Meanwhile it is very important to show all courtesy and deference to those who are in authority. I would not at all press our help, if they are unwilling to receive it. God will suffer us to be exposed to many very unworthy assaults, but if we only wait in patience He will not suffer us to be overcome by them. These little oppositions are of great use to ourselves if we will use them aright. They teach us detachment, and check our natural impulsiveness.

They give us opportunities for the exercise of charity in the way of forbearance, which is a much higher exercise than any active ministration. They make us look to the sanctification of our souls as the great end of life, that God may be glorified by our conformity to His will, whereas we are very apt to lose sight of this in the vanity of our work. Others are sure to partake of our sanctification, but we are not sure to partake of the sanctification of which we may be channels to others.

We had a nice meeting at All Saints' on Friday last. The parochial room under the schools was full. General Tremenheere and the Bishop of Bloemfontein were there, and many devoted ladies. They will now have frequent meetings, having once begun.

I have been having a long talk with Mr. Sandford about China. You know he was on the Legation, and was part of the first audience granted a while ago to European Ambassadors by the emperor. He says the English missionaries do great harm. Of course scarcely any of them are Church missionaries. Scarcely any of them can speak English, but this does not make them more capable of speaking Chinese! When he went out Mr. Wade told him that if he gave eight hours a day to the language he might expect to have about got over the accidence by the end of two years, but to be a long way yet from knowing it at all properly. The Chinese are a wonderfully educated people.

The Mandarins are appointed by competitive examinations going on until they are forty years old or more, chiefly in the Confucian philosophy. I should like to transfer the Noviciate of our Society to some place up the country there, and not allow any attempt at mission work for about five years, and give the time to prayer and study of Holy Scripture, and of the language. We might really develop a monastic life under such circumstances without the distractions which we have at home; and I am sure that would be the right way of bringing some to CHRIST from the Land of Sinim. I wonder if we ever shall be able to start such a house there. Possibly the Public Worship Bill may create a little detachment. Unfortunately, detachment under compulsion is apt to be restless, and then it is worth so little. No doubt one would have one's troubles if one got there; but the superintendence of a Noviciate in the heart of China, far away from many of the molestations of England, would seem to me to be next door to Paradise! However, the disquietnesses round about one do not hinder any place being next door to Paradise, if we are where God has put us; and we need them in order to gain that undisturbed solidity of peace which alone can fit us for the joy of Paradise.



LXXXVI. *To the same.—Retreat at Ditchingham.*

DITCHINGHAM,

*Aug. 25, 1875.*

We have not many in Retreat here this time, only about a dozen, and the Hamlet<sup>1</sup> of the place is absent. I am sorry to say he is very far from well, and they thought the strain of being here during the Retreat would be too much for him. I have not yet been to the Sisterhood, but shall spend Friday with them before going up to London.

I am taking our Retreat from Nathanael, upon purity of heart and the sight of God.

What a law of missionary life there is in the angels first going up to gaze upon God through the heavens which the Lamb has opened, and then coming down from God to do His work upon earth! So must all Apostolical ministries be quickened by the continually renewed exercises of divine contemplation.

Then too our LORD's *finding* Philip implies some moral difficulty in Philip's character, as do the further notices of Philip—apparently an intellectual character. It could not have been mere natural circumstances which made it necessary for our LORD to look for him. The searching is for a lost sheep—lost in some maze of carnal-mindedness. Yet Philip brings the guileless Nathanael, who in JESUS recognizes instantly the

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. W. E. Scudamore, Rector of Ditchingham.



SON of GOD. And so it is that GOD uses us whom He has found with great difficulty, to bring to Him those that we might have expected to have received the call before ourselves.

Then again, how the promise to Nathanael consummates the teaching of the whole chapter as to the tabernacling of the SON of GOD in the nature of man ! The two disciples asked, "Master, where dwellest Thou ?" "Come and see." We are not told where, for what dwelling-place could He have here below ? But now we are told to come and see His true dwelling-place, for the pure in heart shall see heaven opened and the Son of Man at the right hand of GOD ; and His exaltation there is not only a matter of interest to us upon the earth, but it is the final purpose of all creation. Angels desired to look into the divine mystery, but in time past they could not. Now the mediation of CHRIST is, as it were, the highway of the universe. The hosts of heaven gather round it as their resting-place. Upon it they carry on all their movements.

LXXXVII. *To the same.—Conversation with Inquirers.*

*Feast of S. Matthew, 1876.*

Thanks for your interesting account of conversations with inquirers. One must be content to let a good deal of time go in what seems to be waste. It is so in parochial work. You will often find that a second or third-hand hearer

becomes a convert. God will not suffer His Word to fall to the ground, if we are true to Him. What we speak in our own strength dies in the air. What we speak in the power of the Spirit is sure to travel on until it reach the heart which God has prepared for it. The words we speak really in His Name are put into a safe post-box, and are sure to be delivered to the proper person. I fear it makes one feel how often one has spoken mere human words, when one reflects how much of one's preaching has come to nought. So often our words are very true, but are not the living Truth. We should try and always thus speak as the oracles of God. The winds scattered the oracles of the heathen shrine so that they could not be put together again. But He maketh His angels as the breath of heaven to carry home His message which His servants have spoken in the fellowship of His oracular power. It is of no use our speaking for God, unless God be speaking in us. May He of His great goodness so speak by you that many who know Him not may come to His truth. What a mysterious trust the stewardship of the Divine Word is, the Word of His grace.

I am sorry to hear of your bodily pains. You must take care to avoid whatever brings them on as far as you can. We must trust in God to do what we cannot do—not to supplement our full work by mere addition, but to enable us to do what is supernatural. But we are not to trust in Him to do supernaturally what we have natural

means of effecting, and therefore we must take care of health as far as possibility and duty allow.

LXXXVIII. *To the same.*—*The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.*

BOVEY TRACEY,  
Nov. 10, 1875.

I quite feel that the practical neglect of the doctrine of the Trinity has been the great cause of the decay of Christendom. The Church—the Sacraments—Hagiology, I had almost said Mythology—have filled the minds of devout people, partly for good partly for evil.

Thyself unmoved, all motion's Source—<sup>1</sup>

this mystery of the circulating life of the eternal Godhead, has been almost lost to sight, spoken of as a mystery, and not felt as a power or loved as a reality. Western Christendom shut up the teaching of the Trinity in Latin treatises for the clergy. The people could not love GOD when they only knew Him in phrases which were to them an unmeaning jargon. The Passion and the Saints were wrought up in a strange mixture of truth and falsehood. Out of this lower stage of religionism sprang considerations of the Atonement, Justification, and various matters of abstract controversy as to the relation between man and the unknown GOD, and so men got far away from that which was primarily essential. "This is life eternal, to know THEE,"

<sup>1</sup> Hymn at None.

and speculations of mere human reason began to rise up within hearts which ought to have been full of experience of personal love to their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

I have lately been much struck with the beauty of the Church Catechism as contrasted with the Tridentine Catechism, in that it begins so simply with the personal relation between the child and GOD in Whom it has to believe. What a beautiful prayer that is in our Epistle<sup>1</sup> this week, that they may be filled with the *knowledge* (apprehension) of GOD's will, even of the sanctifying Spirit; in all *wisdom*, having been taken up into the Wisdom of GOD; and spiritual *understanding* (σύνεσις), having the human faculties identified with the divine consciousness, so that knowing the sanctifying presence of GOD's will they may *walk worthy* of the GOD-Man, the LORD Whose members they are, and with Whose life they live; *unto all wellpleasing*, so that the Eternal may be well pleased in the members as in the Head—in the active life, *being fruitful in every good work* by reason of the seed, the word of truth of the Gospel, which quickens them; and in the contemplative life, *increasing in the knowledge* or apprehension of GOD, i.e. of the glorifying majesty of the FATHER in the truth of the Beatific Vision. I have made the Epistle the basis of the Retreat here :

The Inheritance of the Saints in Light.  
Faith in CHRIST JESUS.

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Love to the Saints, His Members.  
Instruction on Prayer.  
The Hope laid up in Heaven.  
The Word of Truth.  
Instruction on Sympathy.  
The Spiritual Understanding.  
The Life Worthy of God.  
To-morrow—Strength.  
Endurance.  
Joy.

There are thirty priests here. God bless you.

LXXXIX. *To the same. — Care of Health — The Epistle to the Hebrews.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Nov. 18, 1875.

This will find you at work in Madras. I hope you will get well through Advent. You will, I am sure, take what care you can. It is a bounden duty to work according to God's will, and if we defy natural laws of climate we set ourselves in opposition to that will. It is, in fact, breaking the Tenth Commandment to do more than our circumstances allow, whether in expenditure of health or of other things; and to desire more than God gives is really to fail in the simple desire for Himself, and so to lose what He would otherwise profitably give. The

world has children at its desire, and calls the lands after its own name. But death comes upon all. We must be satisfied with God. He is better to us than many children. We are not to be anxious about the success of our ministry. We shall find after many days what has come of it, and shall not be ashamed when we speak with our enemies in the gate of the Resurrection.

I finish my twenty-sixth parochial sermon on the Hebrews next Sunday, and wind up with the thirteenth chapter. I am not aware of having seen it noticed that the cloud of witnesses are not examples of faith such as we ought to have, but rather the other way. Their faith, great as it was, was only natural, for they without us could not be made perfect. But *our* faith must be supernatural, for JESUS is the Author and Perfecter of *our* faith, perfecting it at the very outset of our Christian life with supernatural energy of grace.

Then too what a striking passage that is: "They *begged off* that the word should not be spoken to them any more." God had come near to them—was ready to come nearer—but they would not let Him. They shrank from the presence of the Word. And now that we have come to JESUS and the Blood of *sprinkling* in the Christian Church [distinguished from the Blood *shed* upon Calvary—not the shedding, but the sprinkling of the Blood regenerates], we must take heed not to *beg off* from the Presence that



speaketh [not for death as Abel's did from earth, but for life from heaven]. For if they escaped not who *begged off* from the manifestation of Him that spoke on earth, much less can we escape if we *turn aside* from Him that speaketh from heaven, in this heavenly covenant of divine life of the Word. We are taken up into God's life and glory. We cannot now beg Him to hold back. If we reject Him we turn aside from Him.

How also this Epistle hinges, not upon the worthlessness of the old sacrifices in general, but upon the worthlessness of the *annual* sacrifice burnt *outside* the camp, the atonement on which the Temple sacrifices rested. So the Christian system rests upon the Sacrifice of Calvary, and the virtue of *that* sacrifice flows on into the Blood of sprinkling, and the better sacrifices of the Christian Church which correspond to those in the Temple. The work of the priests is in both cases proportionate to the foundation sacrifice of the respective high priests.

xc. *To Father Greatheed.—On Preaching Christ in India.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
*Feast of Holy Name, 1876.*

MY DEAR FATHER GREATHEED,

Thanks for several letters. Your geographical one is very useful in helping us to realize

your locality. I hope the Indian Cuddesdon is getting on well. May GOD bless both teacher and taught, and grant you the full illumination of His HOLY SPIRIT. He teacheth us all things, both the words that perish, and the Word imperishable which those words convey. Without His teaching no words have any meaning or power, either for ourselves or for others. If we look to Him, He will always be ready to help us. Bernard must be an interesting charge. How strange that he should come from Burma to be trained at Silotiya! GOD appoints all things, and one seems in such an appointment to recognize some special purpose of His will. May He lead your pupils onward to a full conversion of heart and life, and strengthen you to go before them, showing them in all things the way of eternal life.

With reference to the preaching of CHRIST, I think there must always be some John Baptist preaching of repentance to prepare the way. Paul spake of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come. There must be an arousing of the natural conscience before there can be any implanting of the idea of revelation. The ground must be thawed before you can put in the seed. I do not suppose one would go through much Old Testament teaching of facts, preparatory to CHRIST; but one must, I think, take the Old Testament as supplying a law of procedure, indicating that we should begin with morals. So S. Paul begins his Epistle to the

Romans. It is important to get points of agreement from which to start, and, however depraved the moral atmosphere of a nation may be, yet the works of the law are written on the heart; and if they are capable of loving God they must begin to love Him by desiring Him as the only satisfaction of their nature. "He filleth the hungry soul with goodness." There must be a hunger before we can receive the truth, a hunger after *righteousness*, moral truth, preparing the way for the acceptance of dogmatic truth. There is, alas! too often a hunger for dogmatic truth, and this is only a form of curiosity. I have unintentionally used the very word of the old saying, *Sunt qui scire volunt ut sciant, et curiositas est*. If there be not the moral hunger for a righteousness above nature, bringing with it a sense of the incapacity of Brahminism or Moham-medanism, etc., to satisfy that hunger, there never will be a true perception of the purpose of the Christian revelation. How few Christians have it! They imagine they could be very sufficiently good men without the Christian Faith, and so they accept Christian truth as an extra gift, like a true system of chemistry or astronomy, but not as being essential to their own transformation. So I fear missionaries very generally dwell upon the evil of false religions as representing God unworthily, rather than upon their evil as leaving man's misery unhealed—as if the knowledge of God were vouchsafed because He did not like our thinking

wrongly about Him, whereas it really is given to us, not as a mere rule of speculative thought, but in order that we may become like Him. Let the Hindu see that his incarnations are no help to his nature, and he will desire something better. The foundation of religious teaching is in Genesis i. God made man in His own image. Man must realize the degradation of his own nature as compared with what he feels within himself he ought to be. Then he can look outside of himself for the ideal of himself, and appreciate the eternal sanctity, the eternal Personality, the eternal love of God ; and, flowing from that, the mystery of the Incarnation by which man's own nature is elevated into that sphere of divine energy which alone can satisfy his natural cravings. The perfection of the Mosaic Law manifested its deadness, and the deadness consequently of the highest of natural strivings. If there had been a law which could have given life, righteousness should have come by such a law as that of Moses. It is of no use teaching the people the *facts* of the Old Testament merely as a preparatory system of *facts*, but I quite think that we need to act upon the disciplinary system indicated there. One must act proportionately—not forgetting Hinduism any more than S. Paul in his preaching forgot Judaism—not seeking to show how far it is from truth, but rather to show how much truth it contains, mixed up with all its grotesqueness ; yet showing at the same time very plainly that, true or false,

it cannot make the worshipper perfect—that it is dead—that its grotesqueness is just a result of its deadness—like the rotting of a corpse which breeds worms because it once had life. I do not mean that we ought to catch at every similarity between Hinduism and Christianity as important in itself; for I suppose there are many such, very striking but purely accidental. Many similarities, and much more the primeval traditions of Hindu mythology, have, I doubt not, a real resemblance to Christian Truth—not, however, because they had clearer traditions than were given to the Jews (as some eager divines who have written upon the subject would have us believe); but because the human mind is so based upon the eternal framework of divine truth, that even its accidental results serve to develop the law of Divine Life. For instance, in the most elementary framework of our thinking—in such ideas as the beginning, middle, and end of anything, we have a necessary trinity underlying all our thoughts. But the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not the mere personification of this idea, rather this idea is the natural outcome of the Divine Original Power by which all things are created and sustained, and in Whose image man's mind is made. The Hindu philosopher may thus well arrive by idealizing at results very like to the truths which God has revealed to us about Himself. The eternal and the accidental are not without a certain sort of affinity. But the same truth when approached by mere philosophy, is



like a figure seen distorted through a crooked glass ; whereas the truth as revealed by God to the soul which He has purified for its reception, is seen in its living loveliness, and gives life to us while we contemplate it. We see God as the living, life-giving ideal of *what we want to be*. We cannot be satisfied unless we become like Him. The abstract Brahma is really degraded as he passes into the limits of consciousness by the impersonation of the Hindu trinity and its incarnations. God is *not* degraded, but *man is elevated* by the Incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is not the bringing of the Godhead down to flesh, but the taking of the manhood up into God. A God who would take bad men to heaven—which is, I fear, the popular idea of God among western Christians—is just as much a monster as a god who comes down to earth to do bad things like an eastern incarnation. “Without holiness no man shall see the LORD.” “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” “Woe is me, for I have seen the LORD of Hosts, and I belong to a people of unclean lips.” A sense of the need of holiness in man must prepare the way for an appreciation of the holiness of God. The Incarnation and the Atonement, as manifested in the personal dealing of JESUS CHRIST in the character of Mediator between God and man, develop this holy relationship out of the region of human desire into that of divine reality. The holiness which we could not have by nature, God really gives us by a new creation in CHRIST.



GOD declares to us hereby His righteousness—righteous in Himself, and the Giver of righteousness (not of an unrighteous justification) to those who come to live in the covenant of faith which is established in the Body of CHRIST.

While the moral system needs to be thus developed, I expect that one would also find that the simple facts of the Old Testament had great power to win the attention of the heathen. One must be careful not to put them forward, as if *they* were what we wanted to teach. We must merely teach them as in various ways preparing for CHRIST: but there is in them a simplicity which must have great power for a Hindu mind, frittered away as it is by caricatures and legends with scarcely any meaning, midway between the natural and the supernatural, but not true to either. Simple truth has great moral power. Hence the great power of the Gospel narrative, even as a mere narrative. It fascinates even those who do not look into its deeper meanings and bearings.

Nothing is more calculated to awaken a sense of sin than the exhibition of the character of JESUS. His moral portraiture must awaken the desire to be like Him. There is a missionary lesson in the fact that He lived so many years amongst men, and showed Himself to them in His spotless perfection, before He died for them. He would have them appreciate and desire His Life, before they could rejoice in His Death. Alas! too many do rejoice in His Death

without rejoicing in the truth of that Life which comes out of His grave, because it could not die.

I quite think that one ought to take advantage of any passing events as a text for preaching. The tower of Siloam, the lilies of the field, the altar at Athens, the games of Corinth, are illustrations of this.

GOD bless you and give you the mouth of the learned, learned not in the wisdom of this world, but in that wisdom which the HOLY GHOST teacheth.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*

Tell your pupils I often think of them and pray for them.

XCI. *To Brother Beale.—The Permanence and Power of Missionary Work depend upon Holiness of Life.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Jan. 10, 1878.*

MY DEAR BROTHER BEALE,

So you have plunged into Central India. I suppose by the time this arrives you will have returned to Bombay in expectation of Father

Page's arrival. May God prosper your work, that it may be conducive to your own sanctification, and that growing in holiness you may bring forth much fruit which shall remain. The permanence of work depends upon the holiness in which it is wrought; for nothing can live abidingly save by the power of the HOLY GHOST. How little do we realize the Apostle's words (our Lesson in the Acts to-day): "We will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." The divine ministry is often treated as a mere institution for the transmission of intellectual truth; as if the Apostles had been started, and went on, simply by the first impulse of their mission. Oh, if we had priests really living, basking, constantly in the sight of the Divine Word, so that, being kindled by it, they might set the whole world in flame! We need to sanctify ourselves with much prayer. We must drink in from God whatever we would give forth from Him. It must come to us straight from God. We cannot expect to move the hearts of others save by the power of the HOLY GHOST. But that power needs to be sought. Our LORD is ever waiting to be gracious, ready to give. We, alas! are content with a scanty supply when we have abundance of grace within our reach, if we would only ask for it. We have so little anxiety to be transformed! But until we are, God's work cannot really catch fire in our ministrations. People contrast Christianity as true with other religions as false, but they forget the distinction

between our religion as a living religion, full of divine power while we act true to it, whereas other religions are not merely false but dead. No other religion can offer the Resurrection Life. At the best all, save the faith of CHRIST, can only regulate this outer life.

I shall be interested in hearing what you think of India as you come to know some spots upon it. That is all that any one can know, and there is so much diversity as well as immensity, that one cannot argue from the seen in India to the unseen. The experience of one locality is little help towards another. God bless you all.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*

XCII. *To the same.—The Joy of the Ascended Lord,  
and our Joy in the Growth of His Kingdom.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Ascension Day, 1879.*

To-day one seems to survey the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them, not from any earthly mountain, but from the Hill of Zion, where GOD has exalted His SON that He may reign over all. We are made indeed to sit along with Him in the heavenly places, and we ought to feel in this both joy and strength. What a joy it is amidst all efforts for the extension of CHRIST'S Kingdom to feel the joy which He takes in the

growth of His Body. He would not leave the labour to us while Himself appropriating the joy, nor would He have us toil merely in the hope of a joyous reward hereafter. He wishes us to feel the joy along with Himself in the very act of struggle with evil which develops the good. We must remember that the Kingdom of CHRIST grows not by what it incorporates, but by what it communicates. It is the putting forth of the energies of the Body of CHRIST which constitutes the growth of that Body. It is not the mere annexation of territory for purposes of selfish aggrandizement or even of philanthropic enthusiasm, which constitutes the growth of CHRIST's Kingdom. It is the development of the resources hidden, treasured up, waiting to be developed, in the Body of CHRIST Himself. The nations of the world only afford the material on which the Body of CHRIST is to feed; and as there is a natural glow of joyous health in the natural body in the time of youth, so there ought to be a supernatural glow of divine joy in the members of CHRIST while His Body is growing to its perfection.

We are too apt to treat the disciplinary condition of our present life as if it were a treadmill rather than a gymnasium, and we forget that next to love comes joy as one of the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits that follow it require joy, the divine joy of the Ascended Life, to precede them. The joy which comes after peace is a spurious joy, an earthly one, if it is a joy because there is peace in our days. The true

joy is because of His peace there is no end, and so the joy fructifies in peace as a blessed consequence of its own vitality.

XCIII. *To the same.—Our Life in Christ—His Joy in His Resurrection.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

July 30, 1879.

I am very sorry to hear of your accident. Last week Father Page told me of your fall, but he did not say what the consequences were. I had no idea that it was anything so serious as to have left you with a broken collar-bone. I hope all is now going on well. However, we are in God's hands, and every accident is working out His will. It does, as you say, bring home many truths to our hearts. How delightful it is to feel that we are taken up, as it were, into the vast ocean of Eternal Life which is in CHRIST; not that it is given to us according to the littleness of our grasp, but that we are taken up into the immensity of that changeless Power. That great power of Eternal Life wherewith the Eternal Word fills our manhood by taking it into Himself, takes us one by one into its own undivided fellowship, to be consubstantial with CHRIST the Head—all of us, each one with the others, not each of us having a part, but each of us having the whole, and all of us the very same. The Eternal Life which is the Communion



of Saints with CHRIST the Head remains for ever. We may fall from it, but while we have fellowship one with another the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, bright with His life, cleanseth us from all sin. The life is His, and ours in Him, not in any modified perishable sense, but as true in us as it is in Him, one and the same.

Our meditations to-day have been upon the joy of our LORD's Resurrection, and how we ought to share it—the joy of His human nature rising by the power of the HOLY GHOST to be the adequate instrument of His Divine Person, no longer impeded by the conditions of the Fall which shrouded His earlier life, though He was unfallen, but operating in Him for the glorification of all those energies and faculties which belong truly to humanity. I think we do not dwell at all sufficiently upon the real human joy of our LORD's nature, Body and Soul, since His Resurrection. People often treat our LORD's Body as if it availed for suffering, but was now useless to Him in heaven, so as in reality to set aside the Resurrection of His Flesh; whereas it is really the joyous power that glorifies His Body with all the senses and faculties proper to bodily life in His glorified estate, which constitutes the basis of our sanctification. It is not a formless body which sanctifies us, like a chemical agent, but an organized human Body which enshrines God, and communicates itself as a transforming principle to our bodily nature, bringing into us along with itself all the joy of the eternal life of God.

XCIV. *To the same.—An Easter Letter—The Power of Christ's Resurrection.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

March 12, 1880.

I cannot let Easter Week shine upon you without sending a little letter to catch some of its brightness. How all the acts of this our miserable world do shine with the glory of that Resurrection! We need to learn the power of CHRIST's Resurrection, that so we may welcome the fellowship of His sufferings. Then, indeed, we should be able to triumph in every place and under all circumstances. It is difficult for us even after following CHRIST to Calvary to follow Him on. We are too much like those who smote their breasts and returned. We return to the world as if the triumph of the Cross were to be found in the world, whereas, indeed, it can only be found by pressing onward to death. CHRIST triumphed upon the Cross that we might go through death to victory, not that we might pass to victory without enduring death. Our victory can only be the victory of the dead. Only in proportion as we are dead with CHRIST can we share His victory. We little know how our eagerness for success thwarts the manifestation of the Resurrection power, by which alone the truly mortified life is to be perfected. The Resurrection Life is hidden from the world, but we long for that which the world can and will

appreciate. The Risen Saviour showed Himself to His disciples, but only to them. His Resurrection power is known by His disciples, but only by them. May we have grace to know more and more of it, to live with the doors shut, with hearts truly enclosed, to meet Him on the Galilean mountain far away, to go with Him to Olivet and watch Him as He passes into the cloud, that faith may rest with Him in His secrecy. We need to follow Him in the mystery of the Resurrection ere we rise to the knowledge of the Ascension, just as we need the discipline of the Passion to train us for the hidden life of the Resurrection. God bless you all and grant you much Easter joy.

xcv. *To the same.—Thoughts on the approaching Death of Father O'Neill, Dr. Pusey, and others.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Sept. 14, 1882.*

Your letter is just arrived which sounds the note of warning.<sup>1</sup> Next week we shall hear of the end, that blessed end which is the beginning of the perfect Truth. Truth shines upon us, quickens us, prepares us while we are here ; but the veil is not fully taken away, for the flesh still holds us back, shrouding even the eyes which

<sup>1</sup> That is, of the approaching death of Father O'Neill. He died at Indore, August 28, 1882. R.I.P.

have known most of the illumination of grace. But when the earthly flesh drops off, how calm and pure is the vision which the soul possesses, acting in the pure participation of the glorified Body of CHRIST which is its everlasting home, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And yet it is but the beginning ; for this vision, thus purified, shall be perfected by and by when the body itself shall be brought into the full glory of the adoption, so that the faithful shall be found perfect in body, soul, and spirit with CHRIST in GOD. GOD is gathering His elect together. Besides our own dear Father, there is Bishop Steere, and Bishop Merriman, so recently taken away. And now we are hourly expecting Dr. Pusey's removal. The news of it will doubtless have been telegraphed, so that you will have heard of it before I can announce it. Dr. Pusey's death is an event like a revolution. I am thankful that he was so vigorous up to the last. I think it cannot be a week since he had a letter in *The Times*. He had a seizure of apoplexy. Dr. King saw him yesterday, and was just recognized with a "God bless you." At our School Feast last year, when we went over to Windsor, I took two American Fathers to call on him. He and Skinner were then living together in the priest's house at Ascot Priory. He was then too ill to see us, but has rallied since. Within the last twelvemonth Skinner has passed away, and ere this, perhaps, E. B. P. has followed. If the faint outshinings of divine goodness are so

lovely, as seen by us in some few of the faithful, what will it be when GOD shall be seen glorified in all His saints, the multitude which no man can number, the brightness which surpasses all thought, the breastplate of living jewels shining so transparently with the lustre of the Heart which is their Life? May we have grace so to abide in Him, that when He shall appear we also may be numbered with the saints in the participation of His everlasting glory.

xcvi. *To a Lay Brother of the Society.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 16, 1879.*

MY DEAR BROTHER HENRY,

I quite agree with you in depreciating the gas standards! "Thou art a GOD that hidest Thyself" is the truer law of sanctuary symbolism. And gas is a very fitting symbol of the nineteenth century. However, tastes differ! Only we must not let the glare of the nineteenth century clearness destroy the mystery which will ever shroud the greatest revelations of GOD. That is the misfortune. People nowadays do not like a revelation till it is sharp and clear in its outline, with nothing to cause them difficulty. They do not perceive that faith is very patient of difficulty. They think they believe most when they fancy they see everything.

A very happy Eastertide to you all. God bless you.

Ever affectionately yours in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*

xcvii. *To Father Goreh.—On his ceasing to be a Novice of the Society.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Dec. 17, 1885.*

MY DEAR FATHER GOREH,

May our LORD, Whose birth we are about to celebrate, make the light of His countenance to shine upon you more and more. Of course, I very much regret that you should not be working with us ; but, after all, it is one and the same work that we shall all be doing—one and the same LORD that we shall all be serving, one and the same Spirit by Whose power we shall be ministering. If, therefore, you feel that you can work more happily in your own way elsewhere, I would not attempt to hold you back. Of course, what is helpful to some is a hindrance to others.

You must not think that we shall have any the less affection for you because you go elsewhere. God has drawn us together, and the love which has been formed during these years of our union is too sacred a thing to die out merely because



you do not feel you have a vocation for the Society.<sup>1</sup> I hope you will let us still supply you with what may be needful in the way of food and raiment. There is no need for the world at large to know anything about your relation to us. Every one will doubtless still continue to call you Father Goreh, and there is no reason why they should not; only you will be *perfectly free* to undertake such works as you like, without any reference to any Superiors in the Society, and you will practise such devotions as you find most helpful.

It is, however, for you to settle what your future plans shall be, and Father Page will, I am sure, do his utmost to help you in carrying them out satisfactorily.

You will always be very dear to me, and I hope I shall hear from time to time what you are doing.

Probably the revision of the Prayer Book will give you occupation for a considerable time. It is a very important work.

May God be with you in all that you undertake, and enable you to help in laying the foundation of His Kingdom in various parts of India. You must not be discouraged because people are slow to accept CHRIST. A few years seem to us

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Nehemiah Goreh—here called Father Goreh—was not a professed Father of the Society, but had been a novice for some years. In the earlier days of the Society it was customary to call such novices as were in priest's orders Fathers as well as the professed.

a long time, and we see little result. How little result should we have seen in Jerusalem during the forty years between Pentecost and the destruction of the city! We must pray—wait, weep, and work—and in God's good time we shall find the result of all that has been done. S. James teaches us patience. . . .

May God strengthen us for His holy will.  
With love and blessings.

I am, yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,  
*Sup.*

xcviii. *To Father Puller.—Fire at the Mission House.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Oct. 6, 1886.

MY DEAR FATHER PULLER,

Thank you for your letter. We have about fifty of the clergy in Retreat this week.

On Friday we had a great fright. When I returned from London at 11.45 p.m., I found the street full of people, and all the windows belching forth flames! Happily, not the windows of the Mission House itself, but of a detached house belonging to us in our garden adjoining. The evening papers next day spread a report through the country that the Mission House was burnt

down and the library destroyed. There has been no lack of letters of condolence. It is a great mercy that the Mission House did not catch fire. GOD sent a strong wind to preserve us. It blew the flames straight out into the road. Had it been otherwise our belfry would easily have caught—and then, I suppose, all would have gone. The destruction of this house will somewhat hasten our plans, for I have always been intending to build a refectory and library in that garden, only one did not quite like to pull down the house merely for that improvement. Now we shall set to work as soon as we have funds. It was with a great feeling of thankfulness that we went to bed about three o'clock that morning.

Oxford has a mission going on this week in most parishes. On Saturday morning I gave the workers an address at the early Celebration in the Cathedral. Mr. Carter preached at eleven, and the Bishop addressed them at five o'clock Evensong. Father Rivington and Father Black are at S. Barnabas'.

I have resigned the charge of the Parish, and nominated Mr. Scott, who will read himself in next Sunday. . . .

Love and blessing to you all.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON,

*Sup.*

XCIX. *To a Lay Brother of the Society.*

MAZAGON, BOMBAY,

Dec. 12, 1890.

MY DEAR BROTHER JOHN,

I hope this will find you and all the Community at Cowley thriving as the New Year opens upon us. May God grant us an abundance of blessings in the course of it, and strengthen us all to live more simply for His glory as one year succeeds to another. We have had a great lesson not to be looking forward with confidence even to the next week. How little did I think that Miss Hodges would be so soon taken from us! We cannot look forward with confidence to the next year, or even to the next week, but we can look forward with confidence to Eternity. What a blessed confidence that is! All the trials of life vanish before the simple contemplation of the glory of God. One feels that even more out here, than at home, where there are such vast multitudes round about us who have scarcely any idea of an eternal consciousness of joy shining out before them in the future, because they have no real personal fellowship with God now. One feels the dreariness of being, as S. Paul says of the heathen Greeks, "without God in the world." Yet how few professing Christians are really seeking their joy in living with God in the world. How great the triumphs of Christianity would be if Christian people, instead of merely acknow-

ledging CHRIST as GOD, would give themselves up to experience the life of GOD in themselves as His members. It shows how wonderful the power and truth of Christianity must be that, even in such a diluted form as this nineteenth century tolerates, it is able to win its way, more in spite of ourselves than by any missionary effort which we make.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,  
R. M. BENSON.

c. *To a Lay Brother of the Society. — On his Profession.*

THE MISSION HOUSE,  
COWLEY S. JOHN,  
OXFORD,  
Aug., 1898.

MY DEAR BROTHER HERBERT,

I am so glad to think of your approaching Profession. Certain circumstances make the Feast of the Transfiguration specially dear to me. May you indeed find cause to say, "It is good for us to be here." The day of Profession is indeed a manifestation of the divine light shining round about us during the dark night of earthly existence. We feel ourselves taken up into the company of all the saints along with JESUS; and thus, I suppose, when the routine of life begins again after the Retreat, we seem to lose sight of all that are around but "JESUS

only." All consolations, and the joys of heavenly fellowship, must strengthen us to behold Him. He will return with us to our work in the world, whatever He may have for us to do. And as the vision of the mountain-top was to strengthen the Apostles to learn more of His Passion, so all spiritual joy that He gives us is to strengthen us to share in that Passion, to take up our Cross and follow Him. Visions, experiences, aspirations, pass away from the outward consciousness, but "Jesus only" remains in the heart, and where He is, there we have all. Nothing we can hope for has any value except it be found in Him, and the smallest acts of loving homage are full of heavenly power, the moments of earthly discipline shine with an eternity of joy, if they are quickened by His sanctifying fellowship. It is little that we should have given ourselves to Him—the marvel is that our gift of ourselves is but an echo of His loving call; and while we give ourselves to Him with hearts so dull and eyes so blind, He gives Himself to us that He may quicken our hearts, until our eyes are opened to behold what at present we can only know by faith.

God bless you.

Yours affectionately,

R. M. BENSON.



CI. *To Father Hollings. — On Relinquishing the Office of Superior-General of the Society.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Feast of S. Michael, 1890.*

DEAR FATHER HOLLINGS,

Life is a succession of vanishings, as you say; but I hope it is only the vanishing of dreams to give place to realities. To me it is no disappointment to see Father Page occupying my old place. I have held it quite long enough, and I am sure that it is greatly for the benefit of the Society that Father Page should take office now, and hold it while I am still alive to help in many ways. I think perhaps we may get a little fresh blood into the Society by a little shaking. The new Superior is a great organiser, and has a thorough grasp of the Religious Life. I am sure that he will not let any of the principles go on which I have tried to rear the Society during the last twenty-five years. I shall be able to do a good deal of work in India if it is God's will for me to live on; but certainly I never expected to have lived till now. It sometimes seems to me as if things vanished, not too fast, but too slowly. One knows that vanish they must, and it does seem to be a long time waiting for the curtain to draw up.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.

CII. *To the same.—Answer to Birthday Greetings.*

DROITWICH,  
July 6, 1909.

Many thanks for your loving letter.

I very much prefer the example of Moses stepping into the Red Sea with the armies of Israel when he was eighty years old, to poor Barzillai who declined to accompany David over Jordan, because, forsooth, on account of his age, he was past all enjoyment of life. It must be people's own fault if life is only labour and sorrow. There is a grace of renewal which will surely be given us if we look for it. I told the bath-man that it was the eightieth anniversary of my first bath<sup>1</sup>; but he said he supposed that was not 106 degrees. I did not tell him that we have to go through a good deal of hot water if our yearly round is to bring us any good.

CIII. *To Father Langmore. — Anticipations of a sudden dawn of Divine Light upon India.*

ALL SAINTS' HOME,  
COLNEY,  
*Vigil of S. Augustine of Hippo, 1903.*

MY DEAR FATHER LANGMORE,

Yes, indeed, it is wonderful to think of the multitudes round about us in India so religiously

<sup>1</sup> July 6th was Father Benson's birthday. He was, at the time, taking a course of baths at Droitwich..

steeped in such abominable superstitions ! It is pleasant to find a human heart beating with kindness even amidst the blindness of natural unbelief. One feels that any act of kindness such as the Parsee gentleman exhibited will not go forgotten. Perhaps culture and rational development may be even a greater obstacle to the reception of divine truth than the grossness of revolting idolatry ; but an act of love is a gleam of heaven even in the darkest night. Love is of God, even in its feeblest forms.

The Parsees seem to carry one back to the Epiphany. He who gave the star to guide the Magi is ready to draw to Himself all who are true to whatever instincts He has implanted in their hearts. I cannot help feeling that within a period not far distant there will be a burst of divine light upon India, like the suddenness of a tropical dawn. Perhaps then the benighted multitudes of Hinduism may be found more responsive than the respectable theists who have never known their degradation. Darkness came upon Israel, and God will suddenly remove the veil from Israel. And so, with reference to other nations, the continuance of darkness and its removal are ordered by Divine Providence. It is not by gradual human effort that the Eternal Light can be brought home to the human reason, but it is by the sudden display of divine power. So in our mission work we have to feel the difference between parochial efforts to ameliorate the evil conditions of a Christian country, and

the divine glory ready to co-operate with our faithful endeavours in a heathen land, and, when the fulness of time is come, suddenly changing the whole aspect of society, and calling the population from their utter darkness to the bright welcome of the eternal day.

Those who have borne the marks of their idolatry must learn really to have their lives marked with the Cross, a dedication to the truth as real as was their dedication to the false demons of their national traditions.

I dare say you will find Marhatti a perplexity for some time, but soon you will find it comes natural. Learning an Indian language in England as an intellectual effort, is a different thing from learning it in India by practical and immediate exercise. Having to deliver a divine message in a foreign tongue is such a different thing from formulating empty phrases without any stimulative purpose, for the mere conventional intercourse of social politeness.

Yours affectionately,

R. M. BENSON.

civ. *To Father Bull.—Failing Eyesight.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Epiphany, 1906.*

MY DEAR FATHER BULL,

. . . I am well, but my eyes are failing more and more. I can scarcely read what I

have written. Books belong to the past. I wish I could remember all I have read ; but the books are visible upon the shelves, and the memory is a vanishing quantity. It is a great comfort to be free from pain, and surrounded by friendly help so that one has no need. Alas ! how few people are in such a position. I have no reason to say that all life now is labour and sorrow. I am not up to much activity, yet there is much to enjoy through the activity of others. The news from our foreign and coloured Missions is a great delight.

God bless you all.

Yours affectionately,

R. M. BENSON.

cv. *To the same. — On the Death of the Right Reverend C. C. Grafton, D.D., Bishop of Fond du Lac.*

[NOTE BY FATHER BULL.—I had written to Father Benson from Fond du Lac, the Sunday before the bishop's death, to give him the bishop's last message, "Give him my deep personal love." What follows is Father Benson's reply.]

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Sept. 19, 1912.

Bishop Grafton's death makes a great vacancy in our surroundings. I received the telegram soon after your letter of expectation was written.

As the circle of affectionate memories becomes enlarged in the heavenly record, we learn increasingly the blessedness of the eternal bond which unites us in the company of all saints. The multitude of those whom we love is growing into an indissoluble unity. They pass away from the perishing accidents of time, and lose none of the true fruits of their earthly sojourn by passing on to abide in the permanence of the Divine Life. May we have grace shortly to follow into the bright circle of the heavenly FATHER's welcome. With much affectionate greeting to any along with you whom I remember, and constant prayer for God's blessing on the Society.

Yours ever in CHRIST,

R. M. B.

CVI. *To Father Biscoe. — On Troubles in the Diocese of Bombay.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 15, 1907.*

MY DEAR FATHER BISCOE,

It is, of course, a great strain of obedience to be called to give up many practices which are helpful, and to which one has grown used. But then we have to remember that our sacrifice will be all the more acceptable to GOD in proportion to the cost which has been occasioned to us. Our



worship does not find acceptance with Him by reason of any natural propriety, but in proportion to the self-surrender which has been required from us in offering it. Though we were to give up everything, yet there would be no loss merely because of this or that external impropriety, unless there were some real dishonour to His truth.

We must not even allow ourselves to stand out for something because it seems to us that God's truth may be jeopardized by an omission. Nothing but plain denial of God's truth can make any form of outward expression to be necessary. Whatever the cost may be, God will accept our act of worship all the more because it grieves us to omit something which seemed to us more suitable, if it has been omitted out of consideration to some duty to which His providence has subjected us. The bishop may be erring by his ultra-episcopal infallibility and autocracy, but we cannot be erring by any excess of self-surrender. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." What seems to be jeopardized by surrender will be made the more triumphant by the meekness of a costly obedience.

No cost of self-sacrifice can take away the joy of obedience to a plain authority, and certainly it will not take away the blessing of divine acceptance. We have to look not to outward seemliness, but to the acceptance which each act will find with God. Whatever God commands by lawful authority will bring God's blessing, and nothing

which ignores that authority can be acceptable to Him.

We may hope that God will make the way plain for many evils to be remedied which we bear with, if we accept them in a spirit of faith ; but we must not let our reason treat anything as justifying want of obedience on pretence of the divine glory being imperilled by something which violates our canons of taste. There is danger of stretching out the hand like Uzzah to the tottering Ark. Faith in God's power and promise to maintain His own truth must be supreme. May God grant much grace and blessing to you all in determining what should be done. Every self-surrender is a blessed participation of the Cross.

We have a Retreat going on as usual in this week of the Good Shepherd.<sup>1</sup> It is not a large one, but I trust that God will make our progress acceptable on your behalf, and your progress acceptable for us.

I cannot read what I have written, but I hope it will be legible enough for your eyes. My own blindness increases, otherwise I am very well physically.

Love and blessing to all.

Yours affectionately,

R. M. BENSON.

<sup>1</sup> There is always a Retreat for priests at Cowley in the week beginning with the Second Sunday after Easter, when the Holy Gospel is S. John x. 11 sq.

## PART II

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### MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS







RICHARD MEUX BENSON, AET. 79.  
*(From a photograph by Villiers & Quick.)*



# Letters of Father Benson

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## PART II

### Miscellaneous Letters

CVII. *To his Mother.—A Retreat<sup>1</sup> at Cuddesdon.*

COWLEY,

July 16, 1858.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Thank you very much for your letter, which I found on my table when I walked over from Cuddesdon this morning. What you mention is a thought which had come forcibly over my own mind—that after the great blessings which we have, I hope, all found in the past week; we must expect some great trial to put to the test our resolutions in using them. God has, indeed, been very generous to us in providing us such a quiet place for retreat, and helping us, inexperienced as we are, yet to realize, each in our measure, the great mysteries which surround us. You had not a complete list of subjects. They were as follows :

<sup>1</sup> This, it is believed, was the first Retreat conducted by Father Benson.

SUBJECT.	FRUIT OF THE MEDITATION.
<i>Tuesday.</i>	
The end of man.	Indifference to all created things.
Sin.	Hatred of sin.
Death.	Extirpation of sin.
Judgement.	Knowledge of self.
<i>Wednesday.</i>	
The Kingdom of CHRIST.	Desire to imitate CHRIST in the closest way.
The Incarnation.	Humility.
The Birth of CHRIST.	Love of poverty.
The Passion and Death of CHRIST.	Love of mortification.
<i>Thursday.</i>	
The two Standards, CHRIST's and Satan's.	Resolution to fight for CHRIST against His enemies.
The gift of the HOLY GHOST.	The life of Faith.
CHRIST in glory amidst the redeemed.	Hope.
God, the satisfying end of man.	Love of God.

It has been a blessed beginning of a new year to me. We know not what may be in store before its close. Let us both endeavour to advance in the entire indifference to all outer things and plans, which must be if we would be perfected in the love of GOD. We may be sure that, as He is our original and necessary End by nature, He will be our satisfying End if we follow onward in the call of grace.

We had a nice little company, eleven, and sometimes twelve. One or two of them were men of such advanced holiness that it made one quite ashamed to sit as teacher; but I trust that

the HOLY SPIRIT taught us something, each and all. One thing I very much hope—that, as we have begun the practice at Cuddesdon, others may use the college for the same purpose.

God bless you.

Ever your affectionate son,

R. M. BENSON.

CVIII. *To Dr. Bailey, Warden of S. Augustine's College, Canterbury—Plans for work in India.*

COWLEY,

Aug. 8, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,

Various circumstances, but not want of will, have prevented my writing to you before now to put down my name as a member of S. Augustine's Missionary Union.

I have long been joined to you in all but name, and I trust the Union will be productive of much benefit.

I may, perhaps, take this opportunity of mentioning to you my own plans. I purpose, as soon as certain matters of business set me free, to go out for a twelvemonth to the Bishop of Calcutta, and my design is to gain experience before setting up a Collegiate Association, which I have long desired to see established.

I want some men to join me in a devotional

college in the N.-W. Provinces, living upon our own funds, as much in poverty as possible, and as much orientally in every habit and mode of life as possible.

We should have no connection with any Society, but be simply amenable to the bishop.

I expect we should not require £100 a year apiece if any number of men could be found thus to live together.

At starting I should like us to have a larger average income, say £200; but I have no doubt we might eventually reduce our wants.

When the expenses of starting had been defrayed, and the extravagance of inexperience had been rubbed off, those of us who had a little more than would support ourselves might then give the superfluity to the maintenance of others who had it not of their own.

I feel very strongly that missionary work ought to begin with men, and not with money.

It pauperizes and paralyses the missionary status when the men are agents of a monied Society, and not simply dependent on Him to the extension of Whose Kingdom they are devoted.

I should be very thankful to know of any men who could join me in such a college. If they had not funds of their own, but had really earnest hearts, I should be glad still to be put in communication with them; but I would specially invite those who had just enough for their support at least.

The college would have its daily offices of

prayer and frequent Eucharists, and would be a witness for CHRIST to the heathenism around, and a place from which prayer should be continually ascending on behalf of the heathen.

As a witness, it would in the eye of the world be insignificant amidst the vast population of an Indian city, but the habitual prayer would make it acceptable before GOD, and He will draw to us those whom He wishes us to train for Himself.

If our numbers allow, there would be always a certain number resident, carrying on the offices of the Home, and two and two we should go out on missionary journeys into the country.

I should like, then, to see a body of men gathered together, whose life of what the world would call self-denial and poverty should be cheered with a greater joy than the world can give, by the sympathy of kindred hearts and the spiritual strength of abundant means of grace.

I hope, if GOD spare me so long, to organize some such a work as this in the course of the next two years, when I have more fitted myself for the undertaking.

Meanwhile I would ask the help of your prayers, and assistance in any way which may suggest itself to you.

Believe me,

Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.

CIX. *Farewell Letter to his Parishioners at Cowley.*

Jan., 1867.

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS,

It is now more than sixteen years since I first became Incumbent of Cowley. It often makes me sad to think of what might have been done, and ought to have been done, in that time, and to compare it with the actual results of the period. It has been a time of great numerical growth among us. Would that the spiritual advancement of the parish had been commensurate therewith. It is my earnest desire to see you all walking in the way that leadeth unto eternal life. Let me urge those of you who do recognize the importance of salvation for yourselves, and for others, to say daily the prayer which is printed on the opposite page of this publication.<sup>1</sup> Great are the promises to prayer, and we fail to obtain them because we seek so little.

. . . . .

I must say a few words to those of you, my dear parishioners, who live round about the mother church. It is with great regret that I look forward to the breaking of those ties which have so long bound us together. At the same time you must be well aware how impossible it is for me now to discharge my duties towards you

<sup>1</sup> See *The Manual of Intercessory Prayer*, p. 24.



as I should wish. I am thankful that our parish church is now in a state more decent for divine service, and more capable of accommodating such as can attend. Let me urge you to bear in mind the lesson which a church restoration should always teach us. It is in vain for the church to be enlarged, strengthened, and beautified, unless our hearts in like manner are enlarged with the knowledge of God, strengthened by the gifts of His Spirit, and beautified with evidences of His transforming grace. Strive to set a greater value upon that ministration of righteousness which it is the purpose of God's House to enshrine. I grieve to think of the small number of communicants in the village. Grief does but feebly express my feelings. I tremble to think of it when I know the strong words with which our LORD and Saviour teaches us the necessity of that blessed Sacrament. If men are content to live without that strictness which a continued sacramental union with CHRIST demands, they will soon fall into that open scandalousness of life which in the present day we have so generally to deplore. Come to JESUS, for He is the only source of spiritual strength. Many are the ways in which we may come, but the way which He has Himself appointed, whereby He becomes our spiritual food and sustenance, is the way necessary above all others, the way from which all other means of approaching Him should derive their efficiency. Let me urge you, then, to be diligent in approaching the LORD's Table, careful in pre-

paring for it, watchful in cherishing and using the grace received.

. . . . .

We live in troublous times. I commend you all to the keeping of GOD, and pray that the Spirit of CHRIST may work mightily in your hearts to the glory of His grace and your own salvation.

I am,

Your faithful Friend and Pastor,

R. M. BENSON.

cx. *A Letter to the Parishioners of the New District of Cowley S. John on the Opening of the Mission House in Marston Street.*

S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST MISSION HOUSE,  
Oct., 1868.

The Mission House, or central Home for the Mission Priests of S. John the Evangelist, is now ready, and we are hoping to enter it at once.

Its occupation is to be commenced with a Retreat for clergy beginning on Monday, Oct. 5th, and ending Saturday, Oct. 10th. Let me just briefly state the character and purposes of a Retreat.

The object of a Retreat is to stir up the spiritual life of those who are present at it. One of the clergy conducts it, and it is his duty to deliver three or four addresses each day. In

these addresses the line of thought may be considerably varied according to the will of the conductor, but their general purpose is always the same.

. . . . .

During the interval between the meditations silence is strictly observed, so that all may give themselves to reflexion upon the truths that have been brought before their minds.

. . . . .

The meditations should result in one or more resolutions. . . .

Some religious book is read aloud during meals. . . .

The Holy Communion is celebrated daily during a Retreat, and those who desire it can communicate. In addition to the Mattins and Evensong of the Church, there are also said various other offices of prayer, according to the ancient custom which we know that the Apostles themselves observed—as David had done—of praising God seven times a day.

The third hour was one of the hours of prayer, when the HOLY GHOST descended on the Day of Pentecost. This is nine o'clock a.m.

The sixth hour, or noon, is another, the hour at which our Blessed LORD was hanging upon the Cross when the darkness commenced.

The ninth hour is another, i.e. three p.m. This is the hour of our LORD's Death.

The hours of prayer will be regularly observed

in the chapel of our Mission House, and I hope that many of the parishioners, although unable to attend, will lift up their hearts unto the LORD at such times wherever they may be. A few strokes of the bell will give notice what are the times at which they are said.

The chapel will not be open to ladies, but I shall be very glad if any of the men of the parish will at any time come in and worship along with us. The service is but a short one; and the midday prayer, occurring as it does just when the labouring men rest for dinner, they can easily, if they like it, arrange to come for that ten minutes to our chapel.

. . . . .

Whenever any large building work is going on within reach of us, I shall always be happy, if possible, to arrange for one of the mission clergy to go and open the day's work with prayer, if the clergyman of the parish and the employer of the men express a desire for us to do so. I hope some of our workmen will occasionally come and worship in our chapel which they have built, and that they will bring their fellow workmen along with them.

But to return to the Retreat. I have given this account of what a Retreat is, because I hope that our Mission House will often be used in this way, and that we shall have the prayers of many round about us for a blessing upon these devotional services.

. . . . .

During the first week after the opening of the house there will be a Retreat for clergy ; in the second week for laymen. Such Retreats have now been held in many places for clergy, and for laity both men and women. One principal occupation of the clergy resident with me will be to go into various parts and conduct them.

Another work which our Society especially undertakes is home mission work. We have already been invited by the clergy of various country parishes and of some large town populations—Shoreditch, Liverpool, etc.—to go and help them by holding missions.

. . . . .

In the present state of the country it is very needful that there should be a body of men at the disposal of the parochial clergy devoted to this special work of religious revival.

. . . . .

It is in consequence of being engaged in these works in different parts of the county that our Society is called a Society of Mission Priests, and our central home a Mission House. We do, however, contemplate eventually a mission work in India, whenever our numbers may allow of a branch of the Society being sent out to that country, and I would earnestly ask your prayers that God may put it into the hearts of some to join in this work.

As the parishioners generally know, some of us are Americans, and it is hoped that they will

some day return and organize in the western hemisphere a Mission Society like our own.

Our House will also be opened by the Vice-Chancellor's licence as a Hall for Undergraduates. Those who come here will doubtless be training for Holy Orders, and in this way we may by God's grace be enabled to forward the efficiency of the Church of England.

Let me commend the Society to the prayers of the people of this place, with the assurance that we are constant in our intercessions for the spiritual and temporal well-being of this district.

R. M. BENSON, *Superior*.

CXI. *From a Letter to his Parishioners.—Twelve Days' Mission in London.*

*Dec., 1869.*

The Missions that have been held in various towns in England — Bedminster, Liverpool, Leeds, Frome, Plymouth, etc.—were greatly surpassed in magnitude by the Metropolitan Mission, which commenced on Sunday, Nov. 14th, and ended on Thursday, Nov. 25th. More than one hundred churches took part in it in some greater or less degree. The services in each varied very much according to the needs of the population, and the mode in which divine worship was ordinarily conducted in each of the churches. Certainly there is reason to praise God for a very



special manifestation of His HOLY SPIRIT, not in one place only, but in all the districts where the Mission was held. The hearts of the people of all classes from the highest to the lowest seemed to be touched in a very remarkable manner. One must attribute such a 'great outpouring of divine grace to the many prayers which were being offered up throughout England for its success. There was very little of what may be called the sensational element, either in preaching or ritual, to attract the audiences. It was a simple call from God uttered in the fulness of faith by those whom He had sent, and His Word is great, and His works greatly to be praised.

We had, I know, many prayers throughout England while the Mission was going on. In many places the Holy Eucharist was celebrated with the special intention of imploring a blessing upon the Mission. How should God not be true to His promise? Our eyes have seen the great things that He has done.

During a great part of the Mission there must have been more than 50,000 persons in daily attendance at these churches and schoolroom services. Many of these had never been in the habit of attending divine worship at all. There were three churches open in the City from one to two p.m., with considerable congregations composed of men of business, chiefly clerks in the neighbouring banks and warehouses, who could only attend by sacrificing their dinner hour in order to be present at the Mission Service and

sermon. Wherever such sacrifice is made, we may be sure GOD will grant His blessing. . . . What, then, remains to be done? The work which is God's work cannot come to nought, but we must remember that as He begins so He carries on His work by human instrumentality. He demands prayer from us as the beginning of the work, and He demands prayer from us for its continuance. Let me, then, urge upon my readers the duty of praying for a continuance of God's grace to perfect the work which has been begun in this Mission, and to multiply it more and more.

R. M. BENSON.

CXII. *To a Boy.—On his Confirmation.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

May 23, 1871.

MY DEAR TOM,

I am very glad to hear of your being confirmed. What a joyous day it must have been to you. I should like to have been present at the service in the Iron Church. May GOD of His great mercy perfect in you the grace you then received, and, whatever may be your future calling, lead you onward in the way everlasting. Cling to our dear LORD JESUS now in your boyhood, and you will find His love the joy of your whole life. When the world calls us away from Him, then it is that we are especially proved

whether we are willing to cling to Him or no. We are often apt to think that no harm will come of our giving up our hold upon JESUS on some special occasion, but we find that our power of holding to Him, our joy in holding fast by Him, is destroyed by such temporary unfaithfulness; whereas we might at that time have got some special gift of grace and love. Let your hold upon the Cross of JESUS be the one reality in your life, and it will give reality to other things. That Blessed Spirit who came to you at your Confirmation will be ready to guide and assist you.

So Will is to be ordained on Trinity Sunday! I shall remember you both very specially in my prayers on that day. It is GOD alone who can keep us steadfast. Seek His help constantly in earnest prayer.

My regards to your mother. GOD bless you all. However a family is scattered, His love is a principle of living unity which cannot be broken.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,  
R. M. BENSON.

CXIII. *To a Priest.—On Resigning his Parish to Enter the Religious Life.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
*Monday in Easter Week, 1873.*

All Easter blessings be with you. One of the bright hopes of our Easter is the thought of

your joining us. It is bright because the vocation of a soul to the life of Religious dedication is an inspiration of the divine light, and a flashing forth of the glory of the Resurrection power of our dear LORD.

GOD bless you in your changing, and make your past work to grow in the fellowship of the grace which He is ready to pour out for the increasing sanctification of your own life. It is one of the blessings of Christian life that our past work is never really left behind. It lives on as part of ourselves, and does not suffer hurt by our onward vocations, but receives strength by our own spiritual development. The Communion of Saints knows no break, though it may have to be realized amid very varied successions of outer circumstance.

CXIV. *Reply to an Address from the Parishioners of  
Cowley S. John.*

*Aug., 1873.*

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS,

In the course of the last week a Memorial has been presented to me of too much importance for me to pass it by in silence. I refer to a request that I would pause before determining upon a journey to India for missionary purposes, which I was known to have had in contemplation. The address bears the signature of a number of men of the Parish, and I cannot but feel very grateful for the kindness of

feeling and affectionate regard which such a demonstration implies. I desire, indeed, to thank them for it.

. . . . .

As I read through the list of those who have signed the Memorial, I cannot but regret that many of them seldom, if ever, go to church. I am not the less sensible of their personal friendship, but I cannot help reminding them that personal friendship carries us on together for a few years only. I am thankful that they should look upon me as a friend; but if they valued my ministrations as an ambassador of CHRIST, I should indeed rejoice even more. Let me urge upon the men of this place the great importance of coming to the public ordinances of religion. At the outset of life I broke away from the ties of friendship, in order to seek to win the lost to the love of CHRIST, and whether it be in England or India I care not, but in whatever place my lot be cast no human regard will satisfy me. I long to see you living in the love of CHRIST. If it is the crowded state of the church which has kept any away, I hope that will soon be remedied in a great degree, for I have made arrangements by which another hundred seats will be gained. Whether I am here, or another in my place, I hope the church thus enlarged will be as full as it now is, and that we may in due time attain to a building more worthy of divine worship. But let

us not deceive ourselves. We must come diligently to CHRIST if we desire to be saved.

To His grace I commend you all.

Your faithful Friend and Pastor,

R. M. BENSON.

CXV. *To a Lady.—In Doubt as to her Vocation.*

[In a covering letter this lady writes: "I was a complete stranger to him, about thirty-five years of age, my sisters all married, my mother a widow of quite ample means, and not an invalid exactly, but dependent for companionship, etc., on me. His advice exactly met my difficulties, and at seventy-nine I feel thankful that I followed it."]

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Vigil of the Annunciation, 1874.*

DEAR MADAM,

I have little doubt that your duty is to remain at home. While remaining at home you can probably follow out the principles of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience as truly as if you were in a convent. In obedience to your mother you will especially realize the mystery of that life of thirty years' obedience, upon which the SON of GOD entered at His Incarnation this very day.

A director's counsel plainly is only *counsel*. You must make up your own mind in such a matter, and act according to the interior leadings of GOD's Holy Spirit. You need not therefore



feel in any way hampered because your judgment is not the same as his. It is no disrespect to him, nor any violation of the relationship in which you stand to him. Direction does not involve monastic obedience.

We may be sure that GOD will always make the duties which belong to our natural position, as fixed by His providence, capable of being harmonized with the calls of His grace; and it is our duty to wait until He makes His will plain. The fault of Saul was that he did not wait—but “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength”; and it matters not whether we have to wait for a longer or a shorter time, nor whether our cloister at last be on earth or in Paradise.

May GOD make His will plain to you.

Yours faithfully,

R. M. BENSON.

CXVI. *To a Friend.—On Spiritual Inertness.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 16, 1876.

. . . We must not be disheartened if we do at times feel the state of spiritual inertness which you describe. We must try and resist it. It may be the very means of stirring us up to greater watchfulness. Seasons of spiritual joy and unnatural excitement are more apt to deceive

us. When we feel our nothingness, we have at any rate got one important truth. And in this nothingness the very desire to be something different is the echo of God's voice. He calls us out of our nothingness, and He is able to do with us what He wills. That sense of listlessness is no doubt in part a result of physical weakness; but then our spiritual progress is a mixed battle. It is a battle with our outward nature in various ways. In all these we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." His love is our strength for victory. In action and in suffering, in weariness and in energy, in depression and in joy, His unchanging love must be our continual stay, and He will overrule all for our sanctification.

CXVII. *To a Clergyman.—A Remonstrance.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

June 10, 1876.

DEAR SIR,

I send you herewith some numbers of our Magazine which contain accounts of our Society in India.

I cannot do so without expressing my regret that a clergyman of the Church of England should have thought it consistent with his duty to take advantage of the bishop's absence, and open a place of worship at Bombay in opposition to the appointed minister of the district. However great our differences may be,

I should think you must feel that there was a greater work to be done in India, than that of gathering together and urging on the disaffected members of any Christian congregation. However, I believe I may say that God has overruled for good the opposition which you excited against us. Our work and our congregations at Mazagon have gone on steadily increasing, and no doubt the adhesion of those who were led to oppose us is much more intelligent and valuable now, than it would have been if they had merely continued with us. Nevertheless, this does not lessen the guilt of causing offence and fostering strife. Forgive me if I write strongly, for it is with no personal feeling. I shall be only too glad to know that you yourself regret having taken the part you did in our parish. My own desire is not to dwell upon differences, but to work as heartily as may be possible with all who have the same commission as myself from CHRIST in His Church. But, indeed, I scarcely know any sin so terrible as that of setting people against their legitimate pastor, and therefore I could not write to you on the present occasion without a word of remonstrance. Whatever be the faults of either of us, I hope that in mutual intercession we shall obtain pardon through the merits of our dear LORD.

I am, yours faithfully in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.

CXVIII. *To a Lady.—The Work of the Holy Ghost in Absolution and in Prayer.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May, 1877.

I think you had better go to Confession shortly, and I would have you look forward to receive the grace of conscious freedom in that holy exercise. The gift of Absolution is the loosing of the power of the HOLY GHOST within the soul, which by sin we suffer to be bound. By His power we are loosed, and He is loosed within us. Otherwise our loosing would be nothing worth. He is our Life, and we must lose all other sense of life save that which He is, Himself the LORD and Life-giver.

It is the HOLY GHOST Who must also help us in our prayers—or, more truly, He must pray in us with groanings that our nature cannot utter. The voice of the Spirit rises to the ear of the FATHER. Too often we choke that utterance by our own earthliness, wanting to take some part in the work to ourselves. We do most when we leave Him to do all. Our words simply supply the form of His utterance. The power is ever His. We should endeavour to realize how lovingly and personally He pleads within us. Whatever be the object of our prayer, He desires that object more than we can. What we love, we love only because He, dwelling within us, makes us to love it. It were no true love, true

care, true prayer, unless He did inspire it. The sense of repose in making our own worship subsidiary in all respects to His inspirations will save us from much exhaustion, disquiet, distraction, despondency. "Where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is liberty." May you experience His presence more and more.

CXIX. *To a Friend.* — "*Not Many Wise are Called.*"

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Nov. 5, 1877.

Really God does not want such clever men to do His work. Alas! that they do not want Him to do theirs. God will sooner work by a simple peasant who gives all the glory to Him, for he knows that it is His, than by one of these very clever men who think they are such, and a gain to any cause that they join. We must belong to the little despised company—the three hundred that lapped like a dog—if we would share in the victory of the LORD, as in the day of Midian. I have put "*A distinguished Comtist*" into the intercessory paper, but for *his* sake, not for *ours*. Our faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the wisdom of God. English society is getting to be very much like what Corinthian society was when S. Paul wrote of it, and not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty,

are called. Distinctions such as these matter very little after death. A corpse, after all, is but a corpse, and we cannot be living to God unless we be as corpses in the world, dead to our old selves. The more of self we have to die to, the harder it is to live that true life. If any one says, "Why do not you, or rather, Why does not God, convert some clever man?" the answer must be, "God can do without cleverness. He loves souls because of their needs, not because of their powers." Query : If —— were converted, would not the world say he had lost his senses ? There is more talent after all on the side of God than there is on the other side, only it does not count. God does not count it, for His grace supersedes it. The world does not count it, because it witnesses against the world. Yet where did the world learn what it knows ? Modern civilization is but a caricature of the teaching of the Church, with the best parts left out.

cxx. *To a Priest.—Discouraged in Conducting a Mission.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Feb. 6, 1878.

. . . . .

I hope the Mission will go on well in spite of every defect. It is more likely to have permanent divine result if there be some manifest hindrance. S. Paul had to preach through weakness and infirmity, which made him not very



acceptable to the many. You say there is a want of attractiveness, and a sharp touch of cold steel, in the preaching. Well, I must confess that magnets are very pretty to illustrate lectures, but the cold sword-edge is what one wants in the day of battle. If the congregation draws back from the Mission, perhaps they will come back with the more zest to their own parish priest; and very likely the few who remain for the Mission services are just *the* few who need the Word. However full a church may be, it is only a few who are really moved by the preacher for good, and they are quite as likely to get their want supplied in their neighbour's absence as in a crowded church.

Perhaps too the sight of a church not very full may move the people to prayer, whereas a great tide of success makes us sometimes forget that it needs to be sustained by prayer. I hope all will result for God's glory. We know it must, if that be the simple desire of our hearts.

CXXI. *To a Lady.—The Athanasian Creed.*

EAST GRINSTEAD,

June 4, 1878.

It is a funny way of being *Catholic*, which I believe you profess to be, to choose which articles of the Faith shall be necessary.

Possibly you may misunderstand the words of

the Athanasian Creed. You are not bound to take them according to any private interpretation of what everlasting perdition may mean—but certainly you are bound to take them as true. The Creed has not to do with persons who have not had an opportunity of knowing the Faith. It is an instruction given to a person who wishes to be saved. If he does not hold firmly and faithfully that truth respecting the nature of GOD and the Incarnation of CHRIST which the Church puts into his hand, he cannot be saved. The mere conceit of a thinker who rejects the Catholic Faith respecting such mysteries, in favour of some theory of his own about GOD's unity, or moral character, or anything else, is surely as great a sin as any that a man can commit against his neighbour. Persons are not the less criminal because their crimes are spiritual, or their hearts kindly. At the same time you are only required to enunciate the law, not to apply it. It is not for us to determine who come within the scope of the law, only we must not think that the law of GOD allows of any amiability or refinement as excuse for disobedience. We cannot distinguish between many who could not know, and many who would not. If people in their pride hug to themselves an affected ignorance of GOD, and reject the Faith, they must take the consequences. GOD knows how far any may be to blame; we do not.

CXXII. *To a Lady.—On the Absence of Sensible Devotion.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 12, 1879.

You must not be distressed at the absence of those devotional feelings which you would like to experience. God may grant them or withhold them. Whether present or wanting, they do not add to or diminish from the spiritual virtue and efficacy of our acts. Oftentimes our prayers are best without such warm feelings. Our prayers certainly are less good when we are in such a state of feeling as to seem to ourselves more worthy of God. It is well for us to feel our own unworthiness. This is always rather chilling and wearisome. But never mind : go on. At length, when it is good, the joyous glow of devotion will be granted to you. When God grants it, it in its turn will be of service, and help your spiritual growth. Do not think the Bible is less profitable when it is less pleasurable. Read and listen for the voice of God. God comforts us by manifold discipline. We must learn to leave ourselves in His hands. Do you remember what Thomas à Kempis says?—"Who is there in the world that would not wish to be a spiritual and religious person if he could always ensure high and rapturous devotion?"

No ; we must be equally steadfast under all variations of feeling, and God is unchangeable in the welcome of His love for all who come to Him through JESUS CHRIST.

CXXIII. *To a Friend.—The Discipline of Joy.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

March 4, 1879.

It was a great pleasure to me to receive your kind letter and to hear of your happiness being so complete in your new home. God leads us on from joy to joy, and from sorrow to sorrow. He wishes us to gain many lessons both ways, and He knows what the discipline is which is most helpful for us at each moment. People are perhaps inclined to look upon sorrow as having its lessons for us, rather than joy; but indeed we need both in turn, and in seasons of joy we must gather up treasure of thankful love by which we may glorify God, and be strengthened for the dark hours of the future. It is a great blessing when all things round about us really speak to our hearts with that message which joy ought to bring to us—that God is Love—when our joy is not the mere transitory delight of natural consciousness, but the sanctifying bond of union between us and our LORD in the joy of the right hand of the FATHER. It is quite delightful to hear that you and your husband are so thoroughly one in the LORD.

The present season of Lent seems to come to us with a very special appeal for devotional energy. The successes in Afghanistan and the reverses in Zululand ought to call us to special prayer that all may be overruled for the advance-

ment of CHRIST's Kingdom. And certainly the events of the day which have any bearing upon religion, are of a character that should make us watch very prayerfully for the indications of GOD's will. The penitential exercises of Lent ought to help us forward in the appreciation of GOD's tokens. We need to be pure in heart that we may read them aright. Satan will endeavour to deceive the very elect, and we cannot follow in the way of Truth unless we are learning with much penitence to abide by the Cross. May GOD enable us thus to follow Him, that by His Cross and Passion we may attain to the glory of the Easter.

I am very sorry for your parish trouble. We must learn to pray the more when the answer to prayer is delayed. "Being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly." GOD's answer will be sure if only we put forth the strength which He requires. All things can be obtained by prayer, but faith must show its reality by rising up with the more importunate love just in proportion as the answer seems to be withheld. GOD will never refuse absolutely, but He often says you must pray more. So it is that we forfeit many of His gifts, and yet even then He gives us in proportion to our prayer, and a great deal more than we have asked for.

CXXIV. *To a Lady.—On Going into Retreat.*

ABERDEEN,

Aug. 13, 1879.

I should think it was rather soon to be entering into a Retreat again; but I know no harm likely to arise from it. Of course one needs to be on the watch against the over-use of spiritual stimulants, but this one coming so soon after the other would be rather like a prolongation of it than a fresh excitement. One ought not to go into a Retreat merely for the purpose of hearing — conduct one. One ought not to go unless one feels one would have wished to go with any conductor. One ought to seek God simply in going into Retreat. Otherwise the habit will become like the hearing of a sermon; we shall think more of what is *said* than of what we ourselves are to *do*. Our own part must be so prominent in the thought of a Retreat, that any special gifts of the preacher will be to us little more than the binding of a book is when we are interested with its contents.

You will perhaps be able to determine from this what my advice would be, and that would depend upon the reasons for desiring to go.

May God guide you in your own determination, and bless you with His heavenly grace, that you may have the joy of His fellowship in the power of the HOLY GHOST.

I am, yours faithfully in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.



CXXV. *To the same.—On Ritual.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Sept. 16, 1879.*

We must be careful not to let ourselves be carried away by the desire of ritual.

I think one feels that the highest type of worship for us on earth is that plainness which S. Bernard would have inculcated. But even he allows that ritual beauty may be necessary—a necessary evil—for secular-minded people. The Religious ought to rise above it. So of course ought the religious-minded.

We should always remember that ritual is not for the purpose of pleasing ourselves. It is the offering of wealth, in form, art, and substance to God for His glory, since all creation belongs to Him. If it is our fault that God is not glorified manifestly, we cannot look for the blessing of the worship. But if it is not our fault, the absence of outward beauty can make no sacramental difference in our service ; and we ought not, therefore, to repine, if we are called to worship where things are distasteful. Outward beauty should not be despised, but our Lord's words call us to regard it as of very little practical concern. "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here ! And JESUS answered and said unto him, The time cometh when not one stone shall be left upon another." So must we remember that, although it is a duty to make

GOD's temporal house glorious for His honour, yet our hearts must be elsewhere, even with Himself in heaven. We must feel the nothingness of that which is so soon to pass away. Outward beauty may symbolize the beauty of JESUS as seen by His Church, but in no way does it bring that beauty nearer to our view. As soon as we get to depend upon it for our consolation in prayer, we begin to experience our loss. While earthly beauty speaks to the eye of the beauty of heaven, its shortcoming may speak to us of the same beauty by its unlikeness.

In both ways we must learn to accept the fact that earth cannot rise to the true level of beauty. We must not find ourselves lifted up by it, but beyond it.

CXXVI. *To a Priest.—Victory in Continuing Temptation.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

1879.

. . . May GOD grant to you continually to advance in all that shall help you to be more and more pleasing in His sight. It is a very blessed thing when we feel that GOD has been pleased for some time to give us victory over any special temptation. Any such work of the HOLY GHOST is sure to make us more humble, which involves the two ideas, more and more distrustful of self, more and more trustful in Him.

Freedom from temptation is often a snare of Satan, who leaves us for a season that he may return to assail us more terribly by and by ; but temptation continuing while victory is vouchsafed, is a special evidence of God's grace, for thereby grace is ever increased within us. "Blessed," therefore, "is the man that endureth temptation." Indeed, God frequently seems to leave our prayers for a long time unanswered in order that we may thus grow in grace, resisting Satan. Satan is like the Parthian nation that retreated shooting arrows backward in their flight. So Satan shoots at us, but he is retreating all the while, if we are true to God : "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." The promise is quite sure. May God's blessing be with you always.

CXXVII. *To a Friend.—On Apparitions.*

[This and the following letter are Father Benson's reply to one respecting an apparition seen by a devout lady of well-balanced mind. The apparition followed the family on their change of residence. No purpose for the appearance could be discovered.]

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 1, 1880.*

. . . I would be far from denying the possibility of a spiritual apparition. At the same time one must remember how easy it is for imagination to be quickened quite involuntarily under certain conditions of the nervous system.

It seems to me to be absolutely impossible to lay down any conditions or laws. What one has to consider is the practical result. However demonstrable, I should be inclined to treat the thing as an unreality unless there were some practical result. If it is permitted to happen for any purpose whatever, we may be quite sure that God, Who permits it to happen, will make the purpose known. If He does not, we need not attend to it.

Perhaps the very purpose may be to destroy that vague sense of horror respecting the disembodied spirit, which is so common.

Certainly all apparitions ought to leave the soul nearer to God if they are genuine. Frequency of appearance to the same person is rather an indication of unreality than of the reverse. What we fancy we have seen once, we are likely to fancy more and more.

The few instances of apparitions mentioned in Holy Scripture were not made to solitary persons. Saul's companions saw the light, though not the Person. The witch and the king, both of them, were conscious of Samuel's presence.

The vision of S. Stephen was not an apparition of CHRIST, but an opening of the eye of Stephen to see the truth which he believed. It was an elevation of the soul of the disciple, not a coming down of any presence of the LORD. The immediate effect of this was to enable him to speak the more fully, and to die the more joyfully.

We may be quite sure that a vision must be vouchsafed for the purpose of lifting up our souls to the higher world. If it does not effect this, then the less we think about it the better.

There may, I believe, be apparitions belonging merely to the sphere of the affections, as in the case of dying relations, and the like. These are not religious, but belong to certain spiritual laws of our nature about which we know nothing. Nothing comes of them except (it may be) a sense of comfort. We must be careful not to attach any religious significance to them, for in so doing we may be led into error. These suggestions are very vague, but perhaps they may help you.

CXXVIII. *To the same.—On the same subject.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 4, 1880.*

. . . I should treat the apparition as *strange and aimless*, to use your own words.

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

Perhaps it is permitted for the simple purpose of raising those who see it to a life of greater calmness, so as to be undisturbed by such annoyances. At any rate, until one sees some other purpose, I think all one can do is to use it in this way. Poor thing! Whatever it wants, it can do no harm to the living.

If there is any real purpose connected with the

appearance, we may be quite sure that we shall not be able to guess it, but God will be sure to make it manifest in His own time.

CXXIX. *To the Rev. G. S. Hollings (afterwards Father Hollings, S.S.J.E.).—On Daily Communion.*

LEEDS, M. R. STATION,

July 2, 1880.

MY DEAR HOLLINGS,

I find that in writing to you I have not answered the most important part of your letter.

I suppose that for the present you have a daily Celebration. If that is not the case, I think I should advise abstaining once a week from Communion, except during high festival seasons.

I think it is good for one to feel that which you mention, viz. the great difference between Communion days and others. Also I think one ought to try and cherish the *compensating*, but not contradictory, feeling, namely the *abiding presence* of CHRIST with us, even though we have not quite freshly communicated. We need to stir up the gift of past Communions.

God bless you.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.



CXXX. *To the Rev. J. Baghot De la Bere.—On  
Troubles in the Church.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Jan. 16, 1881.

I need not say how much I have felt for you in this trouble. Indeed, it is a great honour to be permitted thus to suffer for CHRIST. Of course we cannot tell what the immediate issue of this, or of any other struggle of CHRIST's Church may be. But though we cannot tell the immediate issue, we can tell what the ultimate issue shall be. GOD is not forgetful, and the wounds of His Church cry out to Him for the advancement of His glory, and the sanctification of those on whom they fall. No suffering for His sake can ever be wasted.

We may hope that the time is not far off when our LORD JESUS shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to take vengeance upon the ungodly.

But ere He does come we know troubles must thicken. We must not think that the victory will be won by our just feeling a few drops from the threatening cloud. If we are counted faithful, GOD will call us to endure a mighty storm. Blessed be His Name. He knows whether we are strong enough to bear it. If not, the final struggle will still be left looming, and the Church will have another course of weary worldliness to run. If we are permitted to pass on into the days of antichrist we know that, terrible as those days will be, when our few scattered people will

have to live without sacraments, and all we reverence will be exposed to profanation and contempt by those who ought to be the guardians of Truth, yet they are but short, and for the elect's sake they will be shortened. If we will look forward, the present troubles will seem the lighter as compared with what we have to expect, and we gain courage for the moment by looking beyond ourselves to the great issue which awaits us. The victory in the end is sure ; and we shall taste the joy thereof in proportion as we are faithfully bearing our part.

One cannot tell what changes may come over things, nor how suddenly. 'Eighty-one will plainly be an eventful year. As troubles crowd around, let us look up and lift up our heads, hoping that our redemption draweth nigh. Heaviness may lodge with us for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, and it is the joy of a loving FATHER's welcome. We must be preparing ourselves for the swellings of Jordan, remembering that these waters of suffering are hallowed for our deliverance from sin by Him Who was baptized in that stream, and carried in His own Person all the weight of our individual sorrows.

In the present excited state of public feeling it is quite possible that we may get a reprieve—men will call it a victory.

We may live to see the Penzance fetters melted in the fire, or we may have to linger on till death,

fretted by them in the outer nature, but rejoicing all the more in the consciousness of the divine peace. Either way, God will be glorified if our faith fail not, and we shall be sanctified, and the Church will be gaining fresh power for the greater troubles that are to follow.

In all troubles I urge upon our own Society to change the old word of encouragement, and live in the future rather than the past. Our watchword must be *Passuri graviora*.

There is One to Whom we can look back Who has suffered greater things than we can be called to suffer ; but, like the figure reflected upon the western clouds at sunset in some mountain region, we see His sacred Passion reflected upon the evening clouds of this world's little day. It strengthens us from behind, and it welcomes us from before. Blessed shall we be if, in the fellowship of that sacred Passion, we can rise out of ourselves, and find the glory of a life hidden in Him.

May He comfort you and yours, and give you grace to obtain all the blessings of this present anxiety and sorrow. God bless you all.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.

CXXXI. *To a Lady.—On Patience in Waiting upon God.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 3, 1881.

Do not give up your prayer nor your desire for the Religious Life. GOD will perfect you by means thereof, whether the Religious Life be ultimately granted to you or not. What GOD desires for us is to keep us waiting upon Himself. There will be no waiting in the next world. Here waiting is the best mode of spending our time. "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength." We are often weary of waiting times, and pleased when our desires are fulfilled; but blessed are they that hunger and thirst. It is seldom that we can have our satisfaction here without loss. No; we must be desiring GOD, and He will give Himself to us in various hidden ways, oftentimes the very reverse of our expectations. But He is ever leading us onward to a fruition of His own eternal goodness far beyond what we can ourselves conceive.

CXXXII. *To the Rev. G. S. Hollings.—Our Unworthiness Not to Hinder our Work.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 21, 1881.

We must not let any sense of our own unworthiness hold us back from doing GOD's

work, for if we once allow this thought surely we should remain in idleness all our lives. We have to work, but God will work beyond us. The lamp-glass is not the measure of the light which streams through it. When so much is needed we must do what we can, and God will make the oil suffice, whether the cruse be large or small.

CXXXIII. *To the same.—Counsel as to Voluntary Poverty.*

VICARAGE, ABERDARE, SOUTH WALES,  
*Aug. 31, 1881.*

I do not think your proposal is one that would work very practically. The difficulties involved in living without a servant would not make the gain adequate. The people would not feel that you were brought nearer to them by living in such a way. They would merely set it down as an eccentricity. Of course, if it were really by Divine Providence a necessity, it would have the reward of poverty, but as assistant curate to a wealthy vicar you would be occupying a false position.

CXXXIV. *To the same.—On Religious Pictures.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
*New Year's Day, 1882.*

I think you may very well limit yourself to one picture or Cross in your room. You open

up a large question by the way in which you ask my advice respecting this. I think in my inmost heart I only tolerate Christian pictures, even for Catholics generally, as a necessary evil. I am a shocking Puritan !

However, one must leave people to the flood of delusive notions which religious art suggests, and one's only endeavour can be to keep them within bounds. Granted that they are tolerated or approved for Catholics generally, I still should think upon quite other grounds that a Religious is better without them. They are no doubt useful in many ways to uneducated seculars, but we ought to be dead ; and although we may have to see to external matters, such as images and flowers, for others, we ought to be as the dead. There ought to be a felt difference between a room arranged for us, and one arranged for a secular priest.

I do not think you can quite shut yourself out from parish parties.

cxxxv. *To the Rev. J. Baghot De la Bere.—On Ritual Troubles.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
March 12, 1884.

You ask my opinion as to your resignation. One feels loth to give advice in such matters, but I hope you will be guided to do what is best.

My own feeling is that *Fieri non debet, factum valet*. However unjust the deprivation may be,



there is a certain sense in which it must be recognized. The Church of the nineteenth century, with many tumours and crooked limbs, cannot go back to be what she was in the second and third centuries.

Do what we may, we cannot be a simply unestablished set of religionists. Christianity has penetrated society and become identified with it. This is, I believe, what is signified by the Scarlet Lady of the Apocalypse, the union between the Church and the world, which, however one may deplore it, one cannot undo. Nothing will undo it until the heavenly Jerusalem is manifested in the Resurrection. Death, and death alone, can undo it.

Our acts as Christian priests touch upon all the points of social life. You might, of course, maintain that you had no right to be deprived, and that you would therefore set up an altar in some other building when turned out of the church. But it would be impossible for you to maintain your position. You could not, for instance, marry people. They must go to the *de facto* parish priest on this occasion at any rate, and practically on others also.

Diocesan Episcopacy is much more crystallized than it was in the ante-Nicene period. Then, of course, there were bishops and priests struggling one against the other and invading one another's dioceses. Whether that was really more helpful to Church order and unity one may doubt. The unconstitutional oppression of a law court may

perhaps be scarcely so great an evil. There never was a time in Church history when the orthodox party had the power simply in their own hands, so as to be able to carry out what was right, and back up all who would bear witness to it. The violence of the early Christian emperors could be resisted, because the Church had not attained a position legally coextensive with society. Now we have to meet, not violence by suffering, but legal power. Suffering will not change matters. If it would I should say, suffer anything. But if we throw ourselves upon a purely spiritual theory we are returning to a state of things which must be false to us, until society has definitely rejected Christianity. The process is going on, and probably the apostasy may be completed before very long, but we cannot treat a baptized nation as heathen. Our troubles seem to be just like a tumour which, however painful and unsightly, and draining the strength of the system, cannot be removed without loss of life to the patient. One must have one's clothes made to fit it, not because one agrees to its continuance, but because we have no choice in the matter.

I think you have done all that you can in ignoring the unholy tribunal. If you resign now, you are not accepting the tribunal as a right one, but yielding to its power as inevitable.

I hope your father would appoint some one who would carry on all that you have done, at any rate in its essentials. But, however that may be, I think you must leave it in God's hands.

We never know how appointments may turn out. Witness Bishop Colenso's, which was thought to be such a good one! and Dr. Hook, who was appointed in the Evangelical interest! What may happen in the parish after you leave is no concern of yours, except to see that as far as your influence goes, a good appointment is made. If you leave Prestbury there is nothing to prevent your being nominated elsewhere. Such a change rather seems to make the law ridiculous, whereas sturdy local opposition gives it strength, and many consciences are perplexed and wounded, thinking you are right, but clinging to you rather on personal grounds than by reason of a principle. A good many adherents of your opposition chapel would, I fear, scarcely be able to feel themselves quite acting in good faith, but rather in loyalty to yourself as a friend. My advice would therefore be to let some one be nominated in time to save the living from lapsing. To let it lapse would be quite as much accepting the decision as if your father appointed. In fact more so, for if you resign the act has *nothing formally* to do with the legal decision; but if the bishop appoints, he acts *upon the strength* of the legal decision.

If it was a mere matter of temporal suffering I would say, suffer anything; but there is in your case more temporal suffering by resignation than by persistency. It is spiritually that the chief evils of persistency would be felt; and I think there can be no more hindrance to your resigna-

tion now, than there would be if you resigned because the health of one of your family required you to go to a different climate. One is sorry to have to acknowledge a trouble, but one's resignation does not imply that one is a party to it.

Yours affectionately in CHRIST,  
R. M. BENSON.

CXXXVI. *To the same.—On the same subject.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
March 15, 1884.

I do not see that any *principle* is violated by *resigning*. The bishop may—will—say that your resignation is null and superfluous, but by *resigning* you treat the decision as being null and void.

Plainly one has a right to resign one's living for any sufficient cause, such as ill health, disagreement with parishioners, appointment to a new cure.

The fact of being unable to carry out the services in a suitable manner seems to me fully to justify resignation, although one may feel the sentence which occasions the difficulty to be iniquitous.

You have, I think, fully vindicated the principle, and by so doing have done most enduring good to the Church cause. We are in a very different position from what we should have been if you had yielded to the court. *Up to this point* you

could not yield without acknowledging the court. *Now* I think you do more to set the court aside by resignation than by letting things take their course. No one under any system can resist tyrannical power under legal forms.

Do not think that God will suffer your work at Prestbury to perish. We must have faith in Him, and then, even though there may be a collapse for a moment, which is *not* sure, there will be a revival in greater strength. Of this we may be sure. But we must meet the difficulty with faith.

CXXXVII. *To a Priest.—On Conditional Baptism.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

June, 1884.

Unless the lady is seriously disturbed as to her Baptism, I think she may quite well rest satisfied with the knowledge that the Unitarian minister used the right form. Of course, his interpretation of the formula would in no way affect the validity of the Name of God, as long as he used it correctly. What theologian upon earth can be supposed to have a really accurate apprehension of what those words mean?

Happily God's grace is not straitened either by our ignorance or our sin. If she were seriously disturbed, of course she might be conditionally baptized. In that case I would have the ceremony as private as possible. It is so im-



portant not to unsettle the minds of people as to their covenant state with God. If they get to be scrupulous as to some possible technical flaw, there is no limit to the doubt which may be engendered. It is a defect of pious confidence in God if we allow ourselves to think that He is possibly cheating us out of heaven by reason of some minute error in a ceremony we could in no way have hindered. We may be quite assured God does not want to entrap us.

CXXXVIII. *To a Lady.—The Sacrament of Penance.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Nov. 3, 1885.

. . . We must not wish to have cut-and-dried theories as to what is necessary for pardon. If we come to the Sacrament of Penance in a selfish spirit merely to get pardon, we are not likely even to get the pardon. We must confess our sins in order to glorify God: no lower motive will avail.

It is not for us to determine what sins may find pardon with God without absolution. The ordinary shortcomings of faithful people do not theoretically require such absolution—only mortal sins do that—but we come to seek not pardon only, or counsel, but renewing grace. An inferior priest may give absolution to a saint, although quite incompetent to direct such an one. A layman may give direction, although



incompetent to pronounce absolution. It is well for us sometimes to have the one without the other, that we may learn to value each separately. If we use Sacramental Confession aright we ought to feel that the absolution has a real sanctifying efficacy for our present daily life, quite independent of our final pardon, and quite independent of any advice given to us by the confessor.

CXXXIX. *To a Lady.—Christ's Presence in the Holy Eucharist.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

March 3, 1888.

We must not think of our LORD as descending to the conditions of earthly locality and contact by His presence in the Holy Eucharist. His presence is after a heavenly and spiritual manner—a real presence—whereas what is local and earthly is transitory and unreal. His Body is now passed into the heavens, to the reality of eternal glorification. He comes to us in the Holy Eucharist to be our spiritual food, raising us who feed upon Him out of the conditions of merely earthly life, to share His glory. So we are bidden, "Lift up your hearts." A presence by which He should descend to earth would be a second humiliation. His presence in the Holy Eucharist, so far from being a

humiliation, is only possible by reason of His being glorified. He ascended up that He might fill all things. Being glorified, He can manifest Himself wheresoever He will, without motion or change. He loses none of His glory by taking the consecrated elements into union with Himself by the power of the HOLY GHOST.

CXL. *To a Priest of the Church of Ireland.*

NOTE—"I am sending you a letter received from Father Benson some twenty-five years ago. We were passing through a difficult time in Ireland, and matters seemed rather hopeless; a good many people advised me to leave the Church of Ireland, and take work in England, and I wrote to Father Benson for his advice; and this was his answer. Lately I was rewriting the notes which I had in pencil of Father Benson's Retreat which he gave at the Mission House, October, 1890. It all came back to me so vividly—the little Chapel at the top of the house full, there were about forty of us in Retreat, and the Father sitting there pouring forth his soul. I think he only had his watch in his hand. I remember at the time thinking the meditations difficult, but they made an extraordinary impression on me, and I think I was even more impressed by the saintliness and personality of the Father himself. If I remember right, it was after breakfast on the Saturday morning that Mr. Suckling, with the permission of the Father Superior (Father Page) spoke of Father Benson's approaching departure to India, and quoted two sayings about him. One was Canon Liddon's. One of the Fathers, I think, was talking with Canon Liddon about the Society: he asked him if he thought the Society of S. John the Evangelist was a failure. Canon Liddon looked at him—'A failure? I know of no greater witness in England than Father Benson.' The other was the Bishop of Lincoln's, Dr. King; he said of Father Benson: 'He is one of those men who have the rare power of influencing those who have to influence others.' That was

my first visit to the Mission House. I only saw Father Benson once again, and that was three years ago at the Retreat in the Mission House; he was being wheeled in his chair from the garden."

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
*All Saints' Eve, 1890.*

I do not think any good priest ought to leave Ireland who can possibly stay.

A priest is none the better because of a strong Church feeling in the laity round about him. Rather he is needed to bear witness when that strong feeling is wanting. After all, things are not much worse in Ireland, if at all, than they practically were in England when I was ordained.

People do not realize the extraordinary change from winter to summer foliage which has taken place in England. The same will be in Ireland if people can only learn the faith and patience of the saints. Healthful changes *must* take time. It is of no use sticking wax foliage upon the trees to look like summer. But even in winter there is *life*, although the foliage be wanting. We must not therefore despond. How can we?

CXLI. *To Miss Collins, Head Mistress of the Girls' School at Cowley S. John.*

MAZAGON, BOMBAY,  
*Ascension Day, 1891.*

MY DEAR MISS COLLINS,

I hope you and all with you in school are well and prospering. I have been witnessing

education under very different aspects for the last few months, but as the children were thorough oriental scholars, and I could only speak in homely English, I was not able to hold much intercourse with them. Sometimes I have done so through an interpreter. However, the children are very generally being taught English, and English is to them not merely an element of educational progress, but also a door opening towards the Christian Faith. It is wonderful how God is making England, and the English tongue, subservient to His purposes for the evangelization of the world; would that we were more truly corresponding with the duties and responsibilities of our position.

I was in a school the other day at Tinnevelly which the missionary and a catechist built in a day, and it has served its purpose some years, although I have no doubt the Inspector's report would have denounced it as lamentably insufficient. Material—bamboo poles and palmyra-leaves. Cubical contents—holds about thirty children if they sit very close. N.B.—Big children and adults must stoop a bit. Ventilation supplied by openings in the fanlike palmyra-leaves. However, there the good priest, who helped the building with his hands, is training many children for the glorious Home not made with hands, spacious and imperishable. The homes of the country people are just of this sort. Certainly these people have an advantage over us in being able to live constantly under the open

sky ; and as for a dressing-room—well, it is not wanted !

At one village the priest knew that his people would have to be atop of the palmyra-trees by 4 a.m.—probably it was Christmas or Ascension Day—so he had the Holy Communion at 2 a.m. If a service is announced there is never any doubt as to there being a congregation in Tinnevely. Among those dear simple people Church and Communion are just as much a reality and necessity of life as dinner—in fact much more, for they are to them what they really are, the reality and necessity of eternal life. It is wonderful to see the bright, intelligent, loving countenances of the people living in hovels which would not suffice as proper shelter for a dog in poor, dark, chilly, rainy, civilized England. They go on singing their Tamil lyrics as if earth had no troubles—and why should earth have troubles if we are looking forward to heaven ? They often have bad falls, fifty feet or more, from the top of a palmyra-tree. The men climb these palmyra-trees three times a day, perhaps each man forty trees, to get the juice. I am sorry to say that this year hundreds of the trees have died owing to the drought of last season. Bull-gores are also a very common accident, for which they come to be treated at Mr. Margöschis' dispensary. They never hurt the snakes, so the snakes never hurt them. Surely it must be a remembrance of Paradise which makes a snake so afraid of a man as he is. Snakes always hurry

away, and only bite if they are trodden upon or attacked.

Alas ! Other parts of India are very different from Tinnevely. I have travelled nearly 8,000 miles in India now, and the varieties of national life are just as great as they would be in a similar tour through Europe.

Be sure that no amount of miles will ever make me forget those that I have left at home. How many have passed away ! May God give us all grace to persevere. Be watchful, diligent, regular, faithful in seeking Him more and more. You will not fail to find life a hard struggle ; but eternal life in CHRIST is a sure reward.

Ascension Day seems to dwarf all distances upon earth. If the earth is but a speck when its diameter is measured from the sun, what is any number of miles upon its surface when measured from the Eternal Throne of our Ascended LORD ? All space shrivels up into a point in the presence of the Infinite. Wherever we may be upon the earth we must realize the unity of that divine love in which our true life is found.

God bless you.

Yours faithfully in CHRIST,

R. M. BENSON.



CXLII. *To a Friend.—On the Difference between Philanthropy and Divine Charity.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

March 21, 1892.

The "love" of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST which is given unto us. This, I think, is that "charity" which is altogether distinct from the mere human amiability, kind-heartedness, liberality, sympathy, which linger even in our fallen nature—the development of instincts which are found in germ even in the brute animal—and in the organism upon which modern civilization is apt to pride itself, not knowing that that organism is now an empty thing, having lost the divine life by which alone it can be truly put in exercise, and consequently content to suppose that its philanthropy is all that is wanted. No ; philanthropy is very different from love. Love is of GOD, and every one that loveth is born of GOD and knoweth GOD ; and there can be no love to man which does not spring from the love of GOD. The second commandment of love<sup>1</sup> never *can* take the place of the first. The dog's instinct is not so far removed from human affection, as the mere human love of man is from divine charity. Reason and love are one in GOD ; and the intensest love for man created in GOD's

<sup>1</sup> That is, To love our neighbour.

image is the necessary outcome of a true knowledge of GOD, in Whose fellowship our own life consists. We must love man in proportion to our knowledge of GOD. But love of man upon the mere basis of philanthropy is a mere *sentiment*, and can claim no basis in the reason. It is only a form of social expediency. There is no *reason* why one man should deny himself anything for any one else. We must act either for *self*—and *philanthropy* is only a form of selfishness—or for GOD, Who quickens us as His children with supernatural love. The mere *amount* of philanthropic effort—mere giving of life or goods—never brings it under the category of infinite power and divine life. Philanthropy will fail. In fact, generally it flows in well-defined channels, however strong its stream may be, and the land outside is left bare and dry; but divine charity never faileth. It is exhaustless in its outflow, as it is infinite in its origin. It must extend to all the works of GOD. Whatsoever the FATHER doeth the same doeth the SON likewise; and so we get a law of love for all the sons of GOD in the measure of their conformity to GOD Himself.

But altruism, which is the caricature of the second commandment, is an absurdity. It is the divine conclusion without the divine premiss. The *alter* must be *alter ego*, and that cannot be without *Unus Pater*. However much we may accept by faith the *idea* of serving CHRIST in His members, the *reality* of the union between Him

and them is something far beyond what we *can* at present imagine. So the sheep<sup>1</sup> who have acted upon the principle of love to CHRIST do not know how *truly* they are ministering to Him. It is not the goats who are rewarded for their philanthropy, but the sheep who are rewarded for their love. We do not become sheep by philanthropy. The general judgement according to works presupposes the particular judgement according to the vitality of faith, whereby we are justified so as to be among the sheep, or for want of which we are left in a state of condemnation so as to be among the goats. The goats do not see that their whole life has been wanting in the *supernatural aim* which constitutes *Divine Sonship*. They judge actions only by human values. The sheep, though they know they have heard the Shepherd's voice, have not known how closely He was drawing them to Himself in the actions of their earthly discipline.

CXLIII. *To the Rev. J. Baghot De la Bere.—Keble  
—Pusey—The Church in Country Parishes.*

44 TEMPLE STREET,

BOSTON, U.S.,

Oct. 10, 1892.

How people are dying off! As you say, we of the earlier age of the movement are being

<sup>1</sup> cf. S. Matt. xxv. 31-46.

left few in number. We must be all the more closely drawn together ; and the thought of those who have passed on before us must strengthen us that we may feel somewhat of the rest of Paradise, while we wait for the gates to open that we may follow those who are now with CHRIST.

If we are ever tempted to wish that the victory had been more universally won, we may learn to be thankful that so many enemies remain, so various in their kinds, for otherwise our own faith would not have the trials which are so essential to its perfect strength and development.

. . . . .

I have been away in Canada for a week of Retreat with some clergy on Lake Ontario, and during that time two great names have passed away from the world—Renan and Tennyson. What a disclosure death must make to those who have been in some ways greatest and noblest here ! A humble soul living and longing for CHRIST has nothing to lose, and wakes to the vision of peace for which it has longed. That sermon of Keble's to which you refer is very striking. In both Keble and Pusey one is very much struck with the maturity of their earlier writings. They seem from the first to write with the calmness of truth which experience might develop in power, but with the unchangeableness of divine revelation. There is a great contrast between the keen natural intellect watching for earthly results, and the calm faith of a soul

resting equally satisfied in GOD whatever the issues of things may be. Perhaps it is a token of Keble's saintliness that his life is left hidden with CHRIST in all the obscurity of one of the original Apostles. We cannot now have a biography of him. Those who knew about his daily life, and could have pretended to sketch his character for us, are gone. His life was not before the world as Pusey's was. Its secret power operating far and wide is what none can tell. Pusey's life will now be more of a history than a personal delineation such as Liddon must have attempted to draw. Even with Liddon's pen the true memories of that study in Tom Quad could never be brought to light. The things which could be told would have been to things that never can be told, only as the skull to the countenance radiant with beauty, and life, and love. And if it is not so, one feels, as in reading French biographies, that the picture is very pretty but that it is not the living man. I hope that Liddon really has left the materials for Pusey's memoir pretty completely tabulated, so that in due time we may gain a good deal of further knowledge of the last fifty years. Church's narrative and Williams's Autobiography have been a great contribution ; and now Pusey's Life will, I suppose, be the final and fullest record of the time. The movement has naturally been one rather for the town parishes than for the country. It was so with the earliest Christian movement. The simple Dissenter can stir the hearts of a rural



population, but of course poor peasants cannot rise up to the more intellectual aspects of truth. Happily intellect goes for little as an element of individual salvation. Indeed too often it stands in the way of a childlike faith, but of course a revival of doctrine demands a certain power of intellectual capacity. Enough it is if poor people have *the love* of the Truth. The circumstances of later years have been rather against our country people than advantageous to them as a whole. Political circumstances have rudely shaken the quiet reverence for the Church which was widely spread in my earlier days. In many respects there is probably less Churchmanship in country districts than there used to be. The people have been saturated with all manner of prejudices against the Church, and it is only the few who can come forward to accept anything controversially. But it is wonderful how the love of the Truth does find its way to influence the hearts and lives even of many that have not got much brain-power. They do learn the power of Church truth, however little they may be able to defend it. The majority, of course, fall off in such a time of strife to nothingness. We can only lift up our prayer for the remnant that are left, and seek to breathe the life of God into the form of the child, adapting ourselves, like Elisha, to the child's stature. It is only personal influence, with the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST, that can tell upon a country congregation; and it takes a long time, like the prophet's walking



up and down and then returning to stretch himself upon the child, and at last a sneezing seven times, as life begins to show itself.

CXLIV. *To a Friend.—Consecration of the Bishop of Massachusetts, U.S.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Oct. 22, 1893.

. . . You would find many changes at Cowley, even in the short time since you left ; but I hope they are changes for the better—part of that growth which has to be always going on, until we come to the final maturity of another life—to which may God of His great mercy bring us.

I hope that Father Hall, if he is confirmed in his Episcopate, will be able to carry on a good work in Vermont. . . . Our own bishop's consecration was an interesting ceremony, quite stately and worthy of the occasion. The presence of the Archbishop of Zante was a remarkable feature, and gave great relief to the monotony of the Protestant Episcopal<sup>1</sup> costume. He spoke very much as de Maistre did of the Anglican Communion as touching both the Protestant and the Catholic sides of life, and therefore having a great capacity for the work of the future.

<sup>1</sup> The official title of the American Church is "The Protestant Episcopal Church."

CXLV. *To a Lady.—Spiritualism and the Communion of Saints.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Nov. 24, 1893.

. . . As to spiritualism, there can be no doubt that all such communication with spirits departed is sin. It is prying into the hidden things of GOD. It is probably what S. Paul denounces as "Witchcraft," according to our Authorized Version ("Sorcery," Revised Version). It is spoken of as one of the "works of the flesh," just because it is the exercise of a power inherent in our nature, a power intended to be the basis of a holy communion of spirits, but no longer capable of such legitimate exercise, because the spirit of man is now dead by reason of the Fall. Its exercise must be regulated by divine discipline, and renewed by sacramental grace; otherwise it is an abomination. It may be said to be parallel to the bodily communion which is sinful unless hallowed by the grace of matrimony.

The Communion of Saints in the Body of CHRIST is an exercise of this deep, sympathetic principle of humanity in the power of regenerating grace. We hold communion one with another, not as spirit with separate spirits, but as being One Body, One Spirit, in CHRIST. Our nature retains the basis of that fellowship which energizes throughout the Body of CHRIST. But

this we must not exercise in a self-willed, self-seeking, carnal way. We are restored to the Communion of Saints not merely for our own consolation, but for the glory of CHRIST; not for present purposes of supernatural exaltation, but for the eternal glory which shall be when the heavenly Jerusalem is revealed. We have fellowship one with another, not for one another's sake, but as a result of our being taken up into the life of CHRIST the Head. We do not desire "to get something" by asking the intercession of a saint—as I fear people very often do desire, and seek that intercession accordingly. Our communion with departed Saints in the Body of CHRIST is of a much higher character. It is the expression of our united delight in giving glory to JESUS.

One may well fear that the Church has lost much by the development of our intercourse with the faithful departed, dropping down from the general consciousness expressed at Holy Communion in the *Tersanctus*, to a dependence which separates them from us, as if we might rely upon them in their present state to obtain for us gifts which our fleshly nature desires, but which God in His infinite wisdom sees to be unsuitable for us. Prayer is not so much a means of getting something as of becoming fit to receive it. And the idea of prayer which subordinates God's will to the intervention of higher spirits, elevates them out of their proper position as sharing in all the energy of the Body of CHRIST; and, while

seeming to make them nearer God, really degrades them by ignoring their proper subordination to CHRIST by a vital union, which we, the unworthiest of us, possess on earth as truly as the greatest Saints in heaven, because it is a matter of divine life, not of individual prerogative.

I thought your friend would very likely appeal to the practice of so large a portion of Christendom, as if at any rate we might thus hold spiritual intercourse with *baptized* persons departed.

However, there can be no doubt that the general intention of modern spiritualism is to proclaim a natural communion of spirit with spirit, not a development of communion one with another in CHRIST. That is one of the forms of antichrist, which will doubtless seek to parody the Christian Creed by natural spirituality, piety, sublimity—to find outside the organization of the New Man such a sufficiency in human nature, in the old dead Adam, as makes sacramental regeneration unnecessary.

CXLVI. *To a Friend.—Changes.*

BOSTON, U.S.,  
June 19, 1894.

. . . I hope you will find your new home a very happy one. As we move from one place to another, it is no disloyalty to the past to feel that

GOD's unchangeable love is meeting us with fresh tokens of His Fatherly care amid new surroundings. The happiness of the past must grow into the happiness of the future, and in all, both past and future, we find the joyous fellowship of the HOLY GHOST, the presence of CHRIST in all the sympathy of His Humanity, and the power of the Eternal FATHER. . . .

Changes come, and they come just when they are most helpful to us. We might arrange for ourselves changes which would still leave us on the same level. GOD arranges our changes so that we may step upward and come nearer to Himself. And when there is any steep step to take, He will reach His arms down and lift us up, and set our feet upon the Rock.

This is a busy world, busy about nothing. I have just to gather some of the flowers of the wilderness to make a letter home every now and then for the magazine ; but I see very little of the said wilderness. I am more able to realize here than elsewhere the old monkish saying, *Cella Cælum*.

CXLVII. *To a Friend.—On the Relation of a Christian to the World.*

BOSTON, U.S.A.,

Jan. 11, 1895.

. . . I am very glad that Egypt has been so good to you. There is a great joy in the con-

sciousness of renewed strength to be consecrated to God's service, which those of us can scarcely know who have had uninterrupted health. Sickness and weakness are a great blessing, both in the endurance of them, and in the issues to which they lead. It is a blessed thing to give ourselves to God in our weakness, feeling that we can do nothing, and yet are just as acceptable to Him by His grace as if we had command of every worldly capacity ; and it is a blessed thing to rise out of weakness, whether by a call to the better life beyond, or by a fresh call to serve God with higher energies than one had before, whilst still continuing in this world of trial and discipline. The discipline of weakness trains us for what is really a much harder phase of probation, the discipline of strength. When we have learnt that we can do all though we can do nothing, we are fit to go on to the more difficult lesson of faith, that we can do nothing when we can do all.

You speak of the world, and how we are to fly from it. S. Paul tells us that we must keep up many associations in the world, otherwise we must needs go out of it. We have to accept our position. God's call to successive ages is not the same. The principle remains unchanged, but the mode of exercising it varies indefinitely.

We have to consider well what are the duties which God has given to us. They are the signal-posts by which we must be guided. If we put away one cross, as à Kempis says,<sup>1</sup> we shall find

<sup>1</sup> *De Imit. Christi*, Book II, Chap. xii. 5.



another, and perhaps a heavier. Indeed people often think that they can get out of the world, but, in fact, they cannot. The world is not dangerous to us in itself, for it is GOD's creation. It is dangerous to us because it is under the control of the prince of this world, and he uses it for our overthrow. But we cannot escape from the world as an enemy, unless we can escape from him as the rebel commander ; and they who leave the visible world probably find that they are just as much under the pressure of his antagonism in the solitude, where they hope to serve GOD uninterruptedly, as they were amidst the distractions of social life, and that, in fact, they have only put themselves in a position of much greater danger and embarrassment. We have to see what is GOD's will for us, and we may be sure that His grace is sufficient for us in the world which He assigns to us as our place of struggle, but we cannot tell that He will give us grace equally anywhere else. The world is GOD's creation, and therefore if we use it in a manner true to Him we shall be carrying out the purposes of His love. The distinctions of society are of His appointment.

. . . . .

The Church of GOD must be our home, rectifying the evils of our outward position by the HOLY GHOST. We cannot minimize them for our own security by any outward arrangement. It is by acting individually, true to GOD in our own sphere,

that we shall best succeed in minimizing them for the benefit of others, which is what we are bound to do. I am afraid the tendency just now is to try and make the world true to Christian purposes by worldly arrangement, instead of ameliorating worldly arrangements by the vital inspiration of Christian sanctity. "If any man love the world, the love of the FATHER is not in him." And philanthropy, as an element of mere worldly love, will always prove ineffectual ; but if any man love the FATHER he will be sure to love the brethren, and the love will be a renovating power in everything with which we have to do. So it was that the Church gradually triumphed over the evils of heathenism, not by seeking legislation against heathen evils, but by winning people to acknowledgement of individual responsibility to CHRIST. That is what we have still to act upon. We cannot Christianize the social system save by raising it up to the life of the One Body, the power of the One Spirit. CHRIST did not pray that His people should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil. He prayed for us. He prayed not for the world. We must see, then, that we do not forget that we are His children, so as to act in everything by His grace, and that the world is His creation, the sphere of our duty, however fallen it may be, however largely it may be dead. We cannot alter its deadness by any moral mechanism, such as is now in vogue under the name of social science ; but each individual has power beyond telling,

who will act in the world, and against the controlling power of the world, with individual faithfulness to CHRIST. Every one has to be in some sort an Antipas.

CXLVIII. *To a Friend.—The American Bishops and the Virgin Birth.*

BOSTON, U.S.A.,

Jan. 26, 1895.

How nice it is to hear that the men at —— are rallying round the new vicar. Your labours there will bear much fruit to the glory of God. I dare say you were not aware how much the Bible classes were telling upon the people.

How little do people know the blessings of the English Church! The glaring fog which goes by the name of Christianity is terrible! However, the Church here is making very decided progress. The bishops have just put out an admirable Pastoral on the subject of the Virgin Birth and the Higher Criticism. Father Longridge read it in church on Sunday. I hope the trouble in this diocese, which was the occasion of my writing a pamphlet,<sup>1</sup> will serve to make us feel that there are, at any rate, some limits to toleration. I prefer the régime of old Bishop Eastburn,<sup>2</sup> who would not let me preach,

<sup>1</sup> On the Virgin Birth.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Massachusetts during Father Benson's first visit to America, in 1870.

to the régime which will let any one say or do what he pleases, because no one cares about anything.

CXLIX. *To a Friend.—The Christian's Home is Everywhere.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Jan. 27, 1895.

It was a great pleasure to me to get a letter from you. I have often wondered where you were, and now I am very glad to hear that you are in a position of so much interest and usefulness, and that your own health is benefiting by the beautiful climate.<sup>1</sup> How little one knows what part of the world will have to be called "home." And how delightful it is to know that every part of the earth shines with the brightness of that sunshine which really *is* our home, so that, wherever we may be, the glow of home is never wanting to us. The weary sun lights up but half the world. There is no night to the soul on which the Sun of Righteousness shines out. Clouds of darkness there may be at times, but they come from ourselves. The Sun of Righteousness is always making a bright noon over our heads wherever we may be. I do not suppose I am likely to see South Africa, though I should very much like to do so.

<sup>1</sup> Bloemfontein, South Africa.

CL. *To a Friend. — Sickness and Health equally  
Vocations.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

May 2, 1895.

I have seen a good deal of the world since coming away from England, but it seems to me that one may well say of every country what Father O'Neill once said of India, when some one objected to the climate as making it not fit to live in. "Well," said he, "it is a very good country to die in." Yes! the joy of every country is just this—that there is a door opening out of it into Paradise if we are only waiting to depart. Meanwhile we have much to be thankful for. I have an unusual stock of health, which is a great blessing; but no less a blessing is the sickness and pain to which some of us are called. Both health and sickness are responsibilities having each their special blessing if we use them aright. For indeed the blessing of health is not in its present joy, though I am afraid we often treat it as if it were so; but health is a means of serving God, and so both health and sickness have their blessing, not in themselves but in their use. In pain we plainly see what God requires of us. It is hard work, but there is a great reward for those who fulfil the vocation of sickness rightly. It is wonderful for a wanderer like myself to think of your sister continuing these many years imprisoned with so much to bear, but let her be assured there is not a day of it which has not left its mark behind, and the time is coming

when she would not wish to have lost a single hour of pain. . . .

I wish indeed that there were something to brighten up ——'s life with higher interests. He has been left sadly alone in the world. What a strange world it is! The battle of life under all circumstances one can better understand, but there are so many who do not seem to have any part in the battle. Well, we all of us have a battle to carry on within ourselves; and they who win their souls in that interior discipline make the most mark on the world around, although the world has never heard the name of those who have been called to hermit sanctity. But then so many do not even know that there is such a battle, like —— in his harmless, hidden life, so amiable, and so hopeless for want of something to arouse his energies. . . .

CLI. *To a Lady.—The Growth of Native Churches  
to be Waited for with Patience.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Dec. 16, 1895.

. . . We have just lost one who cannot be replaced. We cannot expect many men of Father Goreh's<sup>1</sup> calibre to enrich the Christian

<sup>1</sup> A learned Brahmin priest in Holy Orders, and some time novice in the Society of S. John the Evangelist. (See Letters 57, 58, 97.) He died October 29, 1895. R.I.P.



literature of India for years to come. We are apt to forget how few in number the early Fathers were. If in two hundred years' time we have Indian theologians equal to the Greek and Latin Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, we ought to be very thankful; but that seems to be such a long time to wait. And we are so impatient! But we cannot build up the Christian intellect of a country as quickly as one can build a house in America. . . . People talk of a native Church. But Christianity needs to be acclimatized before a native Church can spring up. The same is true of China and Japan. Indeed, the quicker any nationality is to receive Christian truth, the longer in all probability is the time that it will need to be kept in leading strings. But people have a kind of idea that Christianity spreads by a "*Veni, vidi, vici*," process! A strange conclusion to four thousand years of preparation! The word "*Veni*" makes one think of the Coming which will produce an instantaneous effect not, however, for conversion, but for judgement. . . .

CLII. *To a Friend.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

July 10, 1896.

Many thanks for your greeting. Days of remembrance carry us back to many scenes of earthly love and joy. What will it be to have them all consummated in the eternity of joyous

result which shall be the outcome of all these years of earthly discipline ! We little know, as days go by, what is God's purpose, but it shines out gradually through cloud and sunshine until the noonday for which we look.

I am sorry that your musical power does not return. I was hoping that you would recover it ; but that is as God wills. He trains the heart for the joys of heaven.

I send you herewith a newspaper containing some Cowley photographs. The Society has developed. It was inevitable that such a time must come ; and one cannot but be very thankful to see it taking root downwards, and I hope bearing fruit upwards ; but my own life was more suited to the days of infancy, and I am glad to be out of the way of the world's welcome.

It is a great privilege for the Society to have had some part, however remote, in the Conference at Rome on English Orders. It was a singular token of God's goodwill that there was among us one who was so specially suited for that mission as Father Puller. From all I can learn his presence was a help of the greatest consequence towards getting some points properly represented. Duchesne was immensely pleased at receiving a degree at Cambridge. He dined at the Mission House two Sundays ago, and then went down with Father Puller to Hawarden.

What seemed to me the oddest thing in the dedication of our new Church was that a Dean

of Christ Church should preach the sermon! Fancy, Dean Gaisford! or Liddell! It seemed like a revolution.

CLIII. *To a Religious.—On the Contemplative Life.*

*Undated, probably 1896.*

You ask me about the contemplative life. I would have the contemplative side of the mixed life developed as strongly as possible. I am afraid that in what is called the contemplative life contemplation is very apt to be minimized instead of being promoted. In the old Orders, like the Carthusian, there are few who really rise up to its demands. I fear it rather tends to intellectual stagnation than to the spiritualizing of intellect. This was also Bishop Forbes' feeling. Things are very different with us now from what they were some few hundred years back. Then the intellect was calm, inactive, residing in muscular bodies which needed restraint and attenuation in order to refinement. Now the nervous system is so much fretted by the excitement of life, our own and our parents' lives. We have neither the same logical subtlety, nor the same simple childlike gaze, in which former generations might live. Our bodies will not bear the same external discipline which they could. Then too we have a duty towards the world around us. In former times people could do nothing in the world: they had to retire

into the seclusion of the cloister to escape the world's wickedness. Now we have a vocation to bear witness to CHRIST in the world by active service. I should always fear that one who imagined she had a purely contemplative vocation was indulging a misshapen and self-pleasing idea. To the imagination it appears so much easier than a life of work in the world. If people had to earn their livelihood scantily, like the original hermits, it would be different; but a contemplative Sister in an English Community could not be allowed to feel the real pinch of poverty or the risk of starvation. We must take a thing as a whole, and not imagine that we can reproduce a part of it.

We have to consider well the fitness of things, and to remember that the mixed life is the higher of the two. The contemplative life should not be paralleled against the active. The active ought to have quite as much contemplation as the contemplative. We are none of us yet fit for the Beatific Vision, but by God's grace we must advance towards that fitness with humility and penitence. Also people who desire what they call the contemplative life have no idea of the temptations of the wilderness. "He was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil." The devil will be very close to such; nursing the sick is much safer work than fighting the devil as a solitary.

CLIV. *To a Lady.—On the Death of her Mother.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

Jan. 3, 1898.

Your mother's death must necessarily snap many links. The earthly tie is gone, but in the scattering of a family one realizes increasingly the heavenly bond of unity which death cannot break. The next world was the ghost-world. As time goes on the ghost-world becomes the reality, and the material world a phantasmagoria.

CLV. *To a Friend.—On the Writer's approaching Return to England.*

PROVIDENCE, U.S.

Michaelmas Eve, 1899.

I send you one more greeting from the western shore. May God's blessing be with you and yours from year to year. I am here giving a Retreat to a Community of Sisters. . . . I expect to return to England shortly, probably to sail Oct. 25. I had not expected to leave this country until I went to a better, but I had such an appeal from our Fathers at Cowley that I could not resist. I suppose in these locomotive days they would carry my bones to Cowley even if I died here, although I should rather have given charge in exactly the opposite way to Joseph. Let my bones be put wherever I happen to die, for every place on earth is the

same to us now that CHRIST is risen. I must therefore save them the trouble. At any rate, I must come and look upon the old country once more.

CLVI. *To a Religious.—On the Significance of Incense.*

THE MISSION HOUSE,

COWLEY S. JOHN, OXFORD.

*Quinquagesima Sunday, 1900.*

. . . With reference to the symbolism of incense, we have to bear in mind that it represents the fragrance of the merits of CHRIST, which makes us worthy to approach GOD. By nature we are not worthy to say "OUR FATHER." "The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST" gives us the worthiness of the Divine Sonship, not as a mere matter of divine permission whereby we are tolerated in the Divine Presence, but as a communicated virtue of divine grace whereby we are accepted in the Beloved, so that GOD rejoices in us : "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed." Probably this was the fragrance of the priestly dress which Rebecca put upon her son, although it properly belonged to Esau as the firstborn. Esau had sold his birthright, and so Jacob had a claim to it, and the mother probably recognized the action as a significant occasion by which the patriarchal blessing was to be ensured to Jacob. The family



vestments were apparently kept in perfumes. Probably Joseph's coat of many colours is another intimation of the priestly vestment used in the patriarchal family. The vestment was forfeited by Reuben's sin, and given to the young lad who was the oldest son of the favourite and first-chosen wife. It was thus an object of envy to his brethren, and was associated with his prophetic dreams.

Our LORD assumed our nature, and ministers therein with all the fragrance of divine grace. Human nature at the best would have no right to approach God.

In the tabernacle there was the altar of incense, and on one side of it the shewbread, signifying the Humanity which Messiah, as the Heir of the Twelve Tribes, would assume ; and on the other side the candlestick placed so that its sevenfold light should rest upon the shewbread, the sevenfold Spirit of Divine Life resting upon, illuminating, anointing the Humanity.

The incense was symbolical of the divine merits of CHRIST, Who offered Himself to die upon the altar of burnt-offering outside the tabernacle, and Who offers Himself as the perfect and ever-living Oblation, in Godhead and Manhood, with all the merits of His Passion, upon the golden altar of incense, as the central principle of worship in the Church militant.

Incense, of course, was an empty symbol in the Mosaic tabernacle ; but it symbolized the presentation of Messiah to God as the Hope, the

Reliance, the Fragrance, the Divine Dignity of the Twelve Tribes (of whom, as concerning the flesh, CHRIST should come), when He would claim by His Death and Resurrection the glory of the patriarchal blessing pronounced upon Abraham and his seed. Others could not claim it as a reality, for they died. The true Seed of Abraham showed His right to claim it, because He did not die. When He offered Himself to GOD upon the Cross, He passed from earthly life to heavenly. By death He conquered him that had the power of death. So the veil which hung before the Holy of Holies was rent in twain, and the way into the Holiest was made open by the Blood of CHRIST, living with divine eternal power, accepted of GOD as the Blood of His own dear SON, fragrant with all the merits inherent in His Incarnate Godhead.

It is different now when we use incense. We do not offer it to GOD as a symbol of something which we hope to receive, but we use it for ourselves as a symbol of that which GOD has given. It is as members of CHRIST that we draw near unto GOD. We do not, properly speaking, *offer incense* to GOD in the Christian Church. The Christian Church has symbolical ornaments, but no instruments of worship which are empty symbols. If we use incense, we use it as a symbol of the merits of CHRIST which GOD has given to us by reason of our regeneration. Thus we have power to enter into the Holiest, because our hearts are renewed to eternal life by the

Blood of JESUS. The stench of death resting upon our human nature by reason of the Fall is done away by the Blood of JESUS, which clothes our regenerate humanity with the inherent divine lustre which Adam by his sin had lost, and for the stench of death gives us the fragrance of divine virtue, in the fragrance whereof the Eternal FATHER rejoices, as the old Isaac rejoiced when he blessed his son.

The incense therefore symbolizes what God has done for us in making us worthy to enter into the Holiest, and to share in the acceptable glory of CHRIST's mediation. It is a beautiful symbol, but we must remember that it is nothing more than a symbol. There is no sacramental virtue. The incense of the merits of CHRIST is the true incense which accompanies the pure offering of the Body and Blood of CHRIST in the Eucharistic oblation.

If incense is used in the Holy Eucharist, it is the persons of the worshippers, and the things used in worship, the altar, the unconsecrated elements, which are incensed in order to signify that by the divine benediction they have been accepted of God for this holy purpose. We do not offer incense to God as claiming something from Him, but we put upon ourselves the fragrance of the incense as a symbol that God has claimed us by His regenerating grace, and has made us acceptable to Himself with the fragrance of the merits of CHRIST.

The incense puts an atmosphere of divine

acceptance upon the building, the congregation, the priest, and the altars, symbolizing that we are taken out of the curse of nature, sin, and death, and lifted up into the benediction of grace, holiness, and life ; that we draw nigh purely and simply in the merits of CHRIST, and not relying upon any worthiness of our own.

CLVII. *To a Priest.—The Priest a Father in Christ.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

May 14, 1900.

. . . A priest acts as CHRIST's representative towards CHRIST's children, not as a mere official or deputy, but as a living channel of the grace which comes from CHRIST the Head.

S. Paul speaks of the body being nourished by joints and bands, and knit together and increasing with the increase of God. The Church is a living organism. Consequently the relation between a priest and the people of CHRIST is a relation of father and child. He transmits spiritual life from CHRIST the Head by virtue of the HOLY GHOST which he has received for the office of a priest, just as a natural parent transmits the life of Adam.

The priest is a father in the corporate society of the Church, which is the Body of CHRIST living with the HOLY GHOST. An earthly father is a father only towards those who receive their individual life from himself. The life is trans-

mitted individually, but a priest holds the office of fatherhood towards all who are gathered into the corporate and indivisible life of the Body of CHRIST.

We should not call any one our father upon earth, in the sense of personal reliance upon him by reason of natural gifts or admirable qualities. Such a title as Wesleyan or Lutheran makes the founder of the sect an earthly father, a pope, because it implies individual qualifications to make him trustworthy. A father in GOD is not trustworthy by reason of individual qualifications, but by reason of sacramental relationship, transmitting the unfailing power of CHRIST the Head. By the fatherhood of Christian priests all the members of the body are built up in the new Life of CHRIST, the Everlasting FATHER.

CLVIII. *To a Lady.—On Christian Science.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*S. Andrew's Day, 1900.*

. . . Christian Science is a strange delusion. The devil used to want to persuade people that GOD was an image of himself, sending all manner of trouble and pain to punish people : but he laughed in his sleeve (he has a very large one), and said, "I know it all comes from me, but if they think GOD sends it, I shall have them safe."

Now his plan is to say, "GOD is simple goodness, and would not tolerate evil for a moment. There



is no devil. All is delusion." So he would have people worship comfort and ease. "Holiness is only infinite enjoyment. This is what God wants you to have. Happiness is the best holiness. Hurrah! There is no devil! no pain! no trouble!"

"But must I not serve God?" "Oh, no! don't trouble! Serve yourself! God does not want you!"

But I want Him! Better to serve Him amidst every pain than to live without pain in friendship with a happy devil, and not know God! Take away pain, and this world becomes a blank, for it is the devil's world. Live for joy here, and heaven will be a blank; for there will be nothing to enjoy with God in heaven, unless along with God we have trodden down the devil upon earth.

"He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," is the law of CHRIST, and of all who would live with Him.

CLIX. *To a Friend.—What God has done for our Nation.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Dec. 23, 1900.

Thanks for your letter and the Christmas gift.<sup>1</sup> When will time pass into eternity and pocket-books be no more? When one thinks of the coming year, and all the faults that ought to be recorded day after day in the diary, how one

<sup>1</sup> A pocket-book Almanack and Diary for the New Year.



looks forward with trembling ! But if the years of our natural life are years of sin, the years of CHRIST are years of grace. How wonderful are the gifts of grace which would have to be recorded if our eyes were properly open to them !

I hope you and yours will have a very happy Christmas. I can quite understand that the sense of loneliness increases as years go by, and old life-long interests pass away. After my long absence I find almost all my old friends gone, but I often think of the builder's yard and the church behind.<sup>1</sup> As the stones are cleared away from the yard, the building is rapidly growing to its completeness. One may hope soon to see it in its glory.

I cannot share your feelings about the dying century. It seems to me that GOD has done more for us in the last few years than for any nation that ever was upon the earth. If only we would use our position to His glory ! The South African War has, I think, been a greater blessing to us than could have been well conceived. It has united both our colonies abroad and our classes at home. It has removed much disaffection, such as grows up in peace between rich and poor. England presents an appearance now which makes one tremble by its greatness.

Alas ! People go on deluding themselves with the hope of a time of peace. That cannot

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the building of the tower of the Society's Church on the Iffley Road.

be while this world lasts. At least I suppose there will be a short peace during the days of antichrist. But not until after that can the true peace shine out. When it comes it will be eternal.

CLX. *To a Friend.—On Reading Holy Scripture.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

March 28, 1901.

I think the best way for people to read their Bibles is by following the daily Lessons appointed by the Church. This seems to be a primary duty, and it becomes a nucleus of more extended devotional reading.

Of course some particular event may lead to a special study of some particular passage, or some series of passages giving a historic view of a practice or the development of a doctrine ; but it is a great matter to seek for the elucidation of Bible difficulties rather from the Bible itself, than from the cleverness of critics, who are very apt to introduce thoughts by way of explanation which have no authority either from the Bible or the Creeds. The Creeds must mark out for us the lines of truth which the Bible illustrates. And the arrangement of the Bible is almost as marvellous a work of inspiration as the actual phraseology of individual sentences.

We should always read the Bible as God's own Word, speaking to ourselves. We must consider the circumstances under which the Word

of GOD came to men of old, and we must take care that we read it with a watchful observance of what distinguished those ancient characters one from another. We must see in what way we ourselves differ from them. Many things said of old, before the HOLY GHOST was given, are not applicable to ourselves in the fulness of Christian grace ; but the teaching is just as valuable for us, because it brings out the human imperfection which still remains in us by nature, and we have to see how this is modified or transformed by the fresh elements of the life of grace.

We must seek to see CHRIST in every word, for Moses and the Psalms and the Prophets all spake of Him.

CLXI. *To a Lady.—Friendship based upon the Fellowship of Divine Love.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
July 20, 1901.

The opening day of the Convent was a very happy one. I hope the Community will be prospered in its occupation of the new premises. That glorious cedar-tree seemed to call us to bless the LORD along with the little children that were gathered under its shade. I asked one, "Where do you come from?" "Hong Kong!" So that house must gather together all parts of the world, and shed abroad the blessings of the heavenly kingdom. In that kingdom we cannot be alone.

Earthly friendships are apt to make us feel lonely both in their enjoyment and in their removal, for there is an inner depth of the heart which no social intercourse can fathom. But the power of divine love begins in the depth of our hearts, and we must feel the joyous unity of the Body of CHRIST as we all live in the power of the HOLY GHOST; and that never leaves us, as when streams dry up for want of rain, but is a fountain of eternal life quickening us with the secret upspringing of heavenly praise, however dry and lonely the outward lot may be.

CLXII. *To a Lady.*—*The Bristol Church Congress*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Oct. 20, 1903.

The Congress was a great success. I think it was the best I ever attended. The Colston Hall filled with four thousand men singing the *Old Hundredth*, was grand both to see and hear. The sun, which shines so brightly on you,<sup>1</sup> did not favour us with much of his presence. It was raining every day; but I trust the Sun of Righteousness was illuminating the dust of many hearts. We must take the rain as a symbol of penitence, ready to burst out into the bloom of sanctity when the Congress ends. The bishop said this Congress was the one thousand four hundredth anniversary of the original Bristol Congress,

<sup>1</sup> In South Africa.

A.D. 603, when S. Augustine came ; and now S. Augustine's successor was with them, and all the British bishops of that ancient time found themselves represented in the bishops who were with us on the platform. *Man changes, and nature remains.* I am afraid that only means that the accidents of human life are changing—certainly very much changed since the days of Augustine and the British bishops. *Nature changes, Grace remains.* One would be thankful if man could be changed from the one to the other. I hope the process is going on, even if imperceptibly. There was an element of pride and contempt in those old days, and it lingers on in the twentieth century. England has to learn to be greater than her uncivilized subject-races, by giving them the respect which is due to God's Image, of which as yet those coloured people know so little. I wish we whites knew more of it. We have to learn its reality by developing it in them. The Church must not give up her schools. I hope a few years will find the coloured population greatly changed. If we wish to raise them, in the confidence of having received the trust from God, we shall find that they will be our stay.

We must work for God in full faith that if we do, God will work in us and with us. His presence gives stability, lifts us up when we feel despondent, and keeps us calm when we are over-eager. The work is His, not ours ; and He will acknowledge it when He comes again. A few

years of our lifetime seem a long and weary waiting time ; but He will soon come, and then we shall feel how brief has been our waiting, and our welcome shall be eternal.

CLXIII. *To the same.*—*Christianity Not a Philosophy.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
Nov. 25, 1903.

I think decidedly you ought *not* to read unbelieving books on philosophy. We pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and we must not put ourselves in peril of evil thoughts. Read books, if you like it, on philosophical subjects, such as those by Dean Strong, Illingworth, Moberly. I do not know that you are likely to get much good from such speculations, but they are in the air just now. They cannot really affect the truth of the Christian Faith.

Christianity is not a passing thought. It takes its rise in the third chapter of Genesis. The Old Testament is the history of the struggle of Satan against the people of God, seeking to draw them away from the promise of the coming Redeemer. The Gospels show us the accomplishment of that promise, when the fulness of time was come according to the details of prophecy which God had meanwhile vouchsafed, so as to accredit the Redeemer when He should come. You would find Pusey on Daniel a very interesting book, also Pusey on the Minor Prophets.



Christianity is sketched out in the Old Testament, accomplished in the Gospels, spiritually developed in the Epistles, prophetically delineated in the Apocalypse, miraculously certified in the triumph of the first three centuries, and exhibited in divine power amidst the varying assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil during the long period of Church history. Thus successive generations were carried forward by saintly protests of innumerable martyrs and confessors, both within the area of Christendom, and in the evangelization of the heathen.

The very decay of Christian Faith now going on in Christian countries is itself one of the proofs of the divine character of the Church as a living body; for this decay was foretold, and CHRIST cannot come again until antichrist has gained possession (for a brief time) of the old nations of the Christian Faith. Him CHRIST will destroy when He shall come again to judgement, and then the kingdom of CHRIST will appear in the glory of the Resurrection.

Christianity is not a passing phase of thought or of philosophy. The Church is a militant *power*, a spiritual *Body*, always reasserting itself in spite of temporary defeats. Other religions are forms of human thought, which may have more or less of truth within them. The Church is the Body of CHRIST, the Incarnate Word, the everlasting God. We must derive our spiritual life from CHRIST the Head of the Church. We are the members of His Body. The Sacraments unite

us to Him. We in all our divisions must cherish personal fellowship with Him at the right hand of God. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church except for a brief period. We amidst all sufferings and difficulties must abide in CHRIST, otherwise we must perish everlastingly.

Westcott on S. John's Gospel would probably be an interesting book for you to read, treating of the philosophical basis of Christianity. We must, however, remember that Christianity is not a philosophy ; it is an *historical fact*, quite independent of man's acceptance or rejection.

CLXIV. *To a Lady.—On Spiritual Communion.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Jan. 22, 1904.

. . . . .

If you cannot communicate, you can at least make spiritual communion, and as you are not neglecting CHRIST's command by your own will, you may be sure that He will vouchsafe His Presence to you. He Who opened the eyes of Stephen amidst the unbelieving Jews will certainly make Himself present to the eyes of your soul, and bind you to Himself in the power of the Eternal Spirit. Realize, therefore, that God calls you to a special effort of heavenly worship along with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. He can—He will—feed you. He will

not allow you to suffer loss by what you cannot help.

Alas ! it is too true that the multitude of nominal Christians do not come forward as they ought, to feed sacramentally on all the Holy Days of the Church. You cannot feed sacramentally, as you desire, but you can feed spiritually ; yes, even though you may be unable even to go to church. What multitudes of saints have had to do as GOD enabled them, feeding in spiritual power at the hands of JESUS our great High Priest upon the altar throne !

The priest in the outer sanctuary does not minister as His substitute or representative, but as the instrument of divine ministration. Look up to Him, and He will not suffer you to have any lack of grace by reason of the arrangements of the outer sanctuary in which you draw nigh to Him. Lift up your heart unto the LORD. He will lift you up into the fulness of sustaining power by which He claims you as one of His members, and presents you in Himself unto the FATHER by the power of the HOLY GHOST.

CLXV. *To a Penitent.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Feast of S. John Baptist, 1904.*

Do not think your life is to be thrown away because of any past sins. I believe in the remis-

sion of sins. This is an important article of faith. But of course our past sins do leave certain awkwardnesses which we must accept patiently with thankfulness. Oh, yes! Be *thankful* that you have some difficulty to bear, some disappointment, some cloud. Accept it as the mode in which you are to give God thanks. Do not accept it in any spirit of sullenness, as if God had only half-forgiven you. He loves you as much as ever. See that you love Him more than ever. Grow in His love, and earth's sorrows will lead you onward in heavenly love.

CLXVI. *To a Friend.—Our Prayer, and the Intercession of Christ.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

June 15, 1905.

Our LORD intercedes for us, but He does not pray for us. He says expressly, "I say not that I will pray the FATHER for you, for the FATHER Himself loveth you."

We can say *our Father*, praying in the Name of CHRIST. GOD is our FATHER because He is CHRIST'S FATHER, and we are CHRIST'S members; but we have to speak to GOD with all the confidence of GOD'S children. Intercession does not necessarily assume the form of prayer. We present CHRIST before GOD, especially in Holy Eucharist, although truly and equally in all our

devotions. But CHRIST does not present us before GOD as the objects of His prayers.

GOD has given us to CHRIST as the reward of His life of self-oblation upon the earth. During that life He was praying for us, for you and me, with divine foreknowledge of our needs ; and in His suffering He was accumulating, moment after moment, those merits which after His glorification would be an abiding treasury of grace for His Church.

But when He commended His Spirit into the hands of the FATHER, all was "finished." In the power and virtue of those merits He descended into hell. The prince of this world had nothing in Him when He was hanging upon the Cross. CHRIST descended, and had power by the Eternal Spirit to crush the serpent's head.

When He ascended up to heaven there was nothing for Him to ask for. His Ascension was a manifestation of the great truth, "All that the FATHER hath is Mine." By the Ascension His Humanity received all that belonged to Him eternally as GOD. "All power is given unto Me both in heaven and on earth." In the strength of this power He bids His Apostles go forth and evangelize all nations. They in the power of the HOLY GHOST are to extend His Body, the Church, by gathering individuals into it, until the number of His elect is complete ; so that all the treasure of His accumulated merits may be distributed to the multitude of the elect, and His Church have a life coextensive with the glory

of His own Body. By the HOLY GHOST He wrought those merits in His own Person, and by the HOLY GHOST dwelling in His Body He appropriates those merits to His individual members, according to His divine predestination, so that none of His merits goes unrewarded. The Church in its multitude, and He at the Head of the Body, are coextensive. All that is His is ours. He does not obtain anything for us by prayer to the FATHER, but He sends to us the HOLY GHOST, that we, as His members, may ask the FATHER in His Name, and whatsoever we ask in His Name, as His members, living by His Spirit, the FATHER will give to us.

We often use the phrase that He pleads for us, but pleading is not the same as praying. While we pray, He pleads for us *as claiming* for us what we require. The FATHER gives to us as His members, while He the Head gives efficacy to our prayers. When the FATHER answers our prayers, He is rewarded, for His glorious Headship is recognized, while by the HOLY GHOST He distributes to us what He has already received personally.

He is a Priest *upon* His throne—not a Priest *before* the throne. His life on earth while He approached the FATHER was a life of prayer. Now He has entered with His own never-dying Blood within the veil to sit upon the mercy-seat. The sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist is not a repetition of the oblation on Calvary, so that He as a Priest obtains something. In Holy Eucharist



we go within the veil, and receive from Him that which is His. He communicates to us that which we need. His Body is the Ark of the Covenant, and while we feed thereon we receive from Him the treasure of grace which He has in Himself, and which He distributes to us in proportion as we ask for it. We pray to the FATHER in the power of the HOLY GHOST. We receive in the Incarnate SON, and the SON is glorified by distributing to us, what He by His earthly self-oblation has obtained.

It is a sad thing if any depreciate the necessity of personal holiness. The corporate holiness of the Church is the sanctifying principle—the HOLY GHOST dwelling indissolubly in the Church, the life of all the baptized. But we cannot share this life except in proportion as we call it into individual exercise personally for ourselves. The principle of holiness is the same in us as in the Apostles ; thus we must use that gift so as to be individually sanctified as they were. Otherwise we shall be cut off from the Body.

CLXVII. *To the Rev. J. Baghot De la Bere.*

BOSTON, U.S.,

July 2, 1895.

Thanks for your letter and the *Tablet*. What a biographic memory you have ! Only to think of your knowing days and years with so much accuracy ! As years go by one feels life to be like a

journey through the mountains ; and one wonders whether the ridge to which one is climbing will give one a sight of the glorious landscape beyond, or whether there will be another valley to go down, which must be traversed ere the vision come. It is pleasant to think of those who are alongside of us, journeying onward with a common interest, even though we may not see one another. It is pleasant to think of many who are gone before.

I had not much personal knowledge of —, but I remember him well. How many there are who to the rising generation of clergy are little more than names—even if their names are known—and yet, though they are gone, their work remains. It was GOD's work. The succession of lives is like the trimming of lamps in readiness for some great banquet, and then they are all turned down ; but when the time comes none will be missing, unless they get broken in the trimming. . . .

I remember what you cannot—weekday services in S. Paul's Cathedral fifty-five years ago, when I used often to be one of a very small number present, and except for bodily and vocal presence the small number would need to be greatly reduced. How little could one then have looked forward to what it is now ! And how little could one have looked to a gentle and retiring scholar as likely to organize such a transformation !

I have not got Kidd's *Social Evolution*, nor have

I read it. I shall be very grateful if you send it. I have been reading Balfour's book. That is likely to do good, though I suppose very few of its readers will understand it. That does not matter much. They see what its *drift* is, and few people will be influenced by its meaning. It is all the more "wonderful"—a favourite word of the present day—because it is beyond understanding. One is glad to have a leader in political life capable of writing such a book.

CLXVIII. *To a Lady.—On the Death of an Unbaptized Child.*

Nov. 22, 1905.

It is a sad thing when a child dies unbaptized. It is, upon each occasion, a fresh proof how little Christian people of the present day understand or appreciate the value of their own regeneration.

It is not that we ought to be disquieted because of the child. We may leave the child in God's hands. He loves the child much more than the parents can; and they may trust God to do for the child whatever is best, according to the capacity of human nature redeemed by CHRIST and not tarnished by any actual sin. Of this we may be quite sure. But the parents have to humble themselves in penitence before God, for they have dishonoured Him in neglecting the Sacra-

ment which He has ordained for the communication of His regenerating grace, so that He might be glorified by the sanctification of that child as one of His own eternal children. GOD gave them an opportunity of advancing His glory by giving their natural offspring to be made a member of CHRIST and a temple of the HOLY GHOST. They ought to mourn for the child, not as if GOD were likely to look upon it in wrath, but because it cannot now rise up to that divine predestination of glory to which GOD in His love was calling it, and they ought to feel penitence for having allowed the accidents of nature to arrest the progress of grace. They must seek to live in the full consciousness of their own baptismal grace, which, alas! so few people do realize. The child's death should arouse them to live more earnestly in thankfulness to GOD, as His children, for the divine call of love which they have slighted, and which now they must seek to realize more perfectly as the spiritual foundation of their divine life, both now in time, and hereafter in eternity.

CLXIX. *To a Missionary in South Africa.—Religion and Religiosity—Antichrist.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

Oct. 23, 1906.

I quite agree with you that we are living in a very remarkable age. There are manifold evidences

of the approach of antichrist in his final development. . . . Religiosity takes the place of religion, and people think the world is getting better. But it is very like the building of the Temple by Herod.

It is the same all round in various ways. Controversy takes the place of Bible reading ; and now we are so busy about the Bible as a book that we forget it as the Word of God. We are getting to doubt whether there is any Bible at all. Good men fall unwittingly into such compromises with unbelievers, that the moral and spiritual value of the Bible is lost sight of in the attempt to rescue it from alleged difficulties which reason cannot always answer, although those imaginary inconsistencies are the very mystery of life which faith embraces with thankfulness.

. . . . .

Then we have got far beyond the early Tractarians in ritual. Perhaps there was more asceticism and spirituality before people had got to know when and where to genuflect. I am afraid that many men who will come and sing in a choir, would not come to worship if there was no music. These things we cannot help ; but one sees that the spread of religious interests does not always mean the awaking of the heart's devotion. So with the books which you mention. The study of the mystical life as a phenomenon of the past shows an interest in religion, but of course no

one would think of attempting to live as people lived who had those fanatical ideas ! Those ideas are a phase of human intellect such as you might find in all religions ! The progress of religion enables us to put away such ideas as hallucinations ! So now people take an interest in Hindu philosophy. But the intellectual comparison of various religions only serves to manifest the folly which crops up under the idea of religion. People can study mysticism just because they look upon it as a thing of the past. The early Evangelicals lived, but did not study, it. They are beneath contempt ! If we study the subject intellectually it is a fine sphere for inquiry ! That is what Satan likes to urge. I very much think that the worst ages are generally the holiest. Saints live and thrive under persecution and contempt. The world's approbation implies that CHRIST becomes a corpse. Religion is in inverse proportion to religiosity. I always regard Constantine's vision as an artifice of the devil. When Constantine took up the Cross the Church laid it down. I think that very likely the days of antichrist will have a religious character beyond what has been before, but it will be religion without GOD : and so the few that will stand up for GOD will have to bear a persecution far beyond any that was before. Nothing is so intolerant as latitudinarianism. A bigot can tolerate anything, not so a Broad Churchman. Any real assertion of truth is death to his whole system.

Everything points to a speedy manifestation



of antichrist, for which we may be thankful. For CHRIST cannot come till He comes to destroy antichrist. Europe is evidently losing Christianity. This must be ; and when one looks at the heathen world one may hope that another fifty years will see CHRIST supreme over heathen lands. Three generations of our Christian schools in Africa and India give time enough for a wide spread of Christianity. The traditional religions will have died away, and if the Church does her duty the children of 1990 will have grown up with a much better supernatural Christianity than ever was known in Europe. The ends of the world will come and worship before GOD with a simple devotion such as the post-Nicene Church has failed to retain.

You must not think that I take a pessimistic view of the present day. There is a great deal to make one very thankful. Herod's Temple had CHRIST to teach in it ; and so what the London publishers issue to satisfy an intellectual craving is, by GOD's providence, the means of bringing spiritual truths before minds that are willing to receive them, whereas if the same truths had been simply left to be enunciated by devout priests, they would never have got circulation. I am afraid that the devotional writings of forty years ago are now very little read. Isaac Williams on the Gospels gives place to a controversial class of writers. The devotional books will not sell unless there is a tinge of compromise with unbelief—

otherwise they have no chance of being circulated. They are simply ignored. Dr. Mahan on the mystical numbers in Holy Scripture is scarcely known by name! Wisely, for no one can answer it. Dr. Pusey lives on as a name. Balfour speaks of him, in the House of Commons, as representing the moderate Churchmen who have now to fight against the extremists! Alas, his name! But I am afraid people do not read his volumes of devotional sermons, which were the food of all devout Churchmen in my youth. Successive generations forget their antecedents.

I hope you are well, and that the work of CHRIST is making progress around you. The progress is none the less because political and other tumults prevent its making as much of a show as one might desire. "The LORD knoweth them that are His." S.S.J.E. has much cause for thankfulness, however unobtrusively its work is going on.

CLXX. *To a Friend.—On the Use of Expensive Remedies, and on the Teaching of "Spiritual Healers."*

[The person to whom this letter is addressed had asked two questions: (1) How far is the use of expensive remedies compatible with poverty in spirit? (2) Can the teaching of "spiritual healers"—that one can be sure God always means us to get well, and that we ought therefore to pray for healing without any doubt that it is God's will to heal at once if only we

have faith—be reconciled with the Order for the Visitation of the Sick—that sickness “is God’s visitation,” and that “there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons than to be made like unto CHRIST, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses” ?]

COWLEY S. JOHN,  
1906.

Let me lay down certain principles.

There can be no more harm in using an expensive cure than in incurring any other expense. Silver plate, a carriage and horses, a gold chain are not wrong if they are within your legitimate expenditure. So an expensive journey, or remedy, is not wrong unless it is beyond your means. In many cases an expensive remedy may be cheaper than a lingering illness. A man may be less able to speak if he is suffering from a severe toothache.

Health is God’s gift. Sickness, though it may be a divine chastening, is a Satanic power whether great or little. By the Fall we became Satan’s slaves. We have to resist Satan, and we must not be indifferent to those hindrances by which he strives to prevent our doing God’s will. We must use our utmost strength of purpose to do God’s will, and accomplish whatever may be the work of our calling. To allow ourselves to sink down in sickness is a great sin. It is sluggishness. We have to do our best to shake off the feebleness of nature. We must use such rules of health as we know, whether by experience or by science, to

be most helpful in shaking off the sluggishness which sickness occasions. "Take a little wine." The weakness is a condition of our fallen nature, for which God has provided remedies. To refuse those remedies is pride.

If we know anything to be the proper remedy for our disease we must expect that it will operate properly, and we must assist it by cheerful expectation and thankfulness. If, however, it does not operate properly, we must not let ourselves sink down in despondency and complaining. We do not know God's purposes. We do know that if we fail of receiving the proper help, it is a method of discipline by which God is drawing us from a mere mechanical view of our bodies. God has given us bodies subject to Satanic assaults of various kinds. We must look to God to help us to break Satan's chains. The sickness is allowed in order to increase the vigorous effort of our faith.

Every kind of trouble must increase our faith. It would be no blessing merely to have a trouble removed. The real blessing is the increase of faith by which we bear up against the difficulty, although the difficulty remains. So with sickness. Sickness would be no blessing to us if we could make quite sure of getting rid of it by any process physical or spiritual. We should forget God by getting our health, whereas our sickness is allowed to make us feel our dependence upon God. "Without Thee I can do nothing." In every effort, physical or spiritual, we must be looking

to God for help, and using God's help to the utmost of our power when it is given. Faith does not jump over difficulties, but bears them with loving submission, however heavy and however persistent. There is no promise that I shall get health because I ask God for it, any more than that I should get £100 to pay a bill which is beyond my means.

In both cases there is a duty of looking prayerfully to God to help us to bear our trouble, but no promise that the trouble shall immediately be taken away.

In both cases there is the duty of rising up to co-operate with God. This is what constitutes faith.

Faith does not mean a firm conviction that God will do what *we* want. Faith is a holy energy by which we rise up to do what *God* wants. If we do what *He* wants, we may be quite sure that He will raise us up out of our difficulty, and give us His blessing. But our obedience must precede His manifestations.

It is never safe to argue from the Gospel miracles as to what we may expect God to do for *us*, since we cannot be *sure* that the circumstances are the same now as then. In fact they never *are*, nor *can* be, the same. We may learn from the miracles what tone of mind is pleasing to God ; and we have to see that we conform our minds to that of the recipient of the miracle, not supposing that God's external action will necessarily be the same to us as to him.



A miracle is an abnormal action. It implies an abnormal elevation of the soul in self-forgetfulness, looking up to glorify God.

When people lay so much stress upon prayer as a means of cure, they reverse the process. They want the health for *their own* sake. The true, self-forgetful, God-glorifying prayer of faith glories in the Cross whereby it can follow JESUS. The prayer of faith must develop the power of the Cross, not set it aside.

You must learn what a blessed thing it is to suffer for CHRIST, with CHRIST, and in the likeness of CHRIST. Resist the devil, but oh, do not expect that GOD will drive him away in order to save you the blessedness of enduring the chastening of the LORD!

Faith reaches out to GOD, and looks for an answer to prayer when the victory of faith has been won by patient endurance unto the end.

Our prayers rise up to GOD, and we shall find that He cherishes them. They will all of them have their answer in another world. The true Christian sufferer does not look to be saved by getting *well*, but by getting *holy*, strong in the LORD.

I scarcely know whether I have met all your difficulty, but I think these suggestions will remove much of it. "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." Give me grace to bear my sickness, and give me such measure of sickness as will enable me most perfectly to profit by Thy grace.



CLXXI. *To a Lady.—On Bodily Infirmities.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Holy Innocents' Day, 1907.*

Thanks for your Christmas greeting.

I am obliged to have my letters read to me, but I am still able to write.

I hope you have had a blessed share of the joy of this holy season, although tied down by illness. CHRIST was sinless, and could not experience sickness in Himself; but He was wounded for our transgressions, and He communicates to His people the grace which heals us amidst the sufferings of our fallen estate, and changes the penalty of our natural condition into a means of supernatural sanctification.

. . . . .

Thank God, I am very well, although my natural self is gradually teaching me how little use we have for many of our faculties. We can do very well without eyes, and ears, and much else, or at least with very modified forms of organic existence. The Holy Innocents waited for CHRIST in an intermediate state before they had misused their faculties. Our departing faculties tell us of sin, sin, sin. But the regenerate life of our Baptism calls us from ourselves, to feel our own nothingness, and live dead to ourselves in the purity of CHRIST, Who

calls us, while undergoing our probation, to die to earth, and live by His renewing power in a fellowship of love, for which those infants had to wait until they were called out of the grave as companions of His Resurrection. That Resurrection is our joy in spite of all that we have done amiss ; and the glory of His grace bids us wait for death in joyous hope that we shall be set free from ourselves, if we are by steadfastness of faith abiding in Him.

CLXXII. *To a Priest.—On Criticism and Inspiration.*

I do not think one has anything to fear from the modern criticism. It will have its day, like other dogs ; but people will get tired of it—at any rate serious people will. I was amused at reading the opening pages of an unbelieving article upon theology in the *Edinburgh*. It seems from that that Max Müller and the solar myth have already gone into the antiquarian museum, along with the idea of Hebrew as the primitive language. It has sufficed to amuse the speculative intellect, and now we want another course, like cheese, following sweetmeats ! The Church has never pledged herself to any particular theory of inspiration, and the critics ground their attacks upon the supposition that we are pledged to certain views. One can never read attacks of unbelievers, whether against wide

or narrow positions of defence, without seeing that they entirely misconceive what the Church's teaching is. The difficulties of the opponents of a strict inspiration are so much greater than the difficulties of its supporters. We must look for unbelief in every form to spread as the coming of CHRIST draws near, but the only result is to make the recognition of truth all the more clear for the diminishing number of those who love His appearing. One may well be content to leave difficulties unanswered, and wait for the solution of the last day. As Dr. Pusey used so often to say, "Holy Scripture has much more to fear from its defenders than from its assailants." Holy Scripture is sure in the long run to defend itself. Or rather, GOD is in the midst thereof; therefore no weapon formed against it can eventually prosper. No doubt *some* of the critical conclusions are right, but how many of them are idle guesses! Guesses put forth with an apparatus of learning stand for *Q.E.D.*

CLXXIII. *To a Priest. — On the Death of his Father.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*April 6, 1909.*

Earth passes away and all that we have loved, but love remains in the eternity of GOD. The vision of Easter becomes brighter and

brighter as the number of God's elect becomes complete. We have loved upon the earth, but dimness shrouds all the past. How intense will be the joys of knowing as we are known! When the dim veil of flesh yields to the brightness of the indwelling Presence of JESUS, all that is of earth will have passed away, and GOD shall be all in all. Oh, to be buried with CHRIST! The season of Holy Week lifts up our hearts to realize death as being only the door of a better life.

CLXXIV. *To a Lady.*

COWLEY S. JOHN,

*Aug. 5, 1912.*

. . . I am almost entirely a prisoner to my armchair. One sits quietly at home with those quarrelsome excitements to which you allude stirring the atmosphere around us. I am not able to read the newspaper, but I think perhaps one loses very little. One will not be examined hereafter as to one's more or less acquaintance with the strifes which the newspaper chronicles so eagerly. It is a comfort in a scattered life like that of our Community to feel how indissoluble and unchangeable is that all-surrounding love which sustains us in the Divine Unity.

There is one change in which we can rejoice, and yet it is not a change, but an illuminative growth by which we are transformed into the eternity of the Divine Life, so as to learn in-

creasingly the blessedness of the life which is our all-sufficing portion in God's love.

CLXXV. *To Miss Ellen Crawley, Littlemore.—The Approach of the End.*

MISSION HOUSE,  
COWLEY S. JOHN,

Oct. 30, 1912.

Your letter from Littlemore brings back to me the memory of many dear friends once so closely associated with that place. All the houses in that region, which were once so full of living interests, occupy the same sites as in former times, but have no longer any speaking voice for me in my little domicile. I know not where any of their occupants are gone; a new generation has risen up. Time has done its inevitable work in clearing many away. My own more immediate interests are scattered all over the world.

Father Page died on Wednesday the 23rd.  
. . . He was happy to die whilst his work was still in progress.

. . . . .

As for myself, I have much cause for thankfulness in witnessing the growth of our Society's work, although I am quite shut by from external co-operation. I am quite well, but utterly

incapable of joining in anything that is being done. "All my bones are out of joint," but while CHRIST is reigning at the right hand of GOD I cannot say that "my heart is like melting wax." Rather the progress of CHRIST's work all over the world must strengthen one's heart to praise GOD as the end draws near.

I am not capable of doing anything for myself, but it is a great pleasure to have the Brothers round me to keep me going.

I hope my writing is legible. It is almost impossible for me to read ordinary printed books. I sit over the fire, and happily that which I once would most need to read is in the Psalms, in very familiar words. I am able to go to the daily Celebration which we have in our own church every morning at eight o'clock. Other services in church are of little avail: I am too deaf to take in what is read.

I hope that soon I shall find the eyes of the blind opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. It is a great comfort at my age to have no pains.

One knows that the waiting time cannot be long. How joyous will be the meeting with those who have gone before!

We old people owe a constant debt to those who help us on the way with their prayers, and we can return the debt in prayer for them.



CLXXVI. *To the same.—The Close of the Year.*

[Written in weakness and blindness, and with difficulty.]

MARSTON STREET,

*Dec. 31, 1912.*

Thank you for your greeting. The year closes, but the forthshining of Divine Love is ever new, and His blessing everlasting.

Ever yours in Him,

R. M. BENSON.



## APPENDIX



# I

*Extract from a Sermon preached by the Bishop of Oxford in the Church of the Society at Cowley, on Sexagesima Sunday, 1915, reprinted from "The Church Times."*

BETWEEN the years 1840 and 1850, under the leadership largely of Dr. Pusey, the Religious Life was revived among women. And then some twenty years after, Father Benson, who has just been taken away from us in his extreme old age, the Founder of the Community whose Church this is, made his great effort, in the faith and zeal, the perseverance and indomitable courage which distinguished him, as you know so well. He made the effort to revive the Religious Life among men. Among laymen it is true we have made at present very little way in this revival of the Religious Life. But it has been re-established firmly, please God, for ever, amongst us in the ranks of the clergy through the faith and courage of the Father Founder of this Society.

. . . . .

Now, whether among men or among women, I desire to make my most fervent prayer, I desire to ask your most fervent prayer, that this great

restoration, which we owe to those of the generation which has passed away from us, may not be, through any slackness, or lack of courage, or love of licence, or undue individuality of temper, dwarfed and rendered nugatory by our failure to respond to a definite and permanent vocation.

There are two points about Father Benson's part in the restoration of the Religious Life upon which I would speak only a word. I remember, forty-three years ago, after Father Benson had come from Old Cowley to this more modern part of the parish, taking refuge from a storm in a public-house. I was an undergraduate, and being full of enthusiasm for Father Benson, I remember talking to the publican about him. And I remember the publican's words. He said, "Oh, yes, we all like Mr. Benson ; we were sorry to lose him ; he was a good man ; there was no pride about him."

It was true : he was a great exhibition of Christian humility. Humility is not by any means servility. No one can be stigmatized as servile who had such courage as Father Benson had to maintain what God gave him to maintain ; but at the same time no one had a greater respect for other people's gifts. I remember being present at a scene in the Tutors' Association in Oxford when Father Benson made a great plea for mortification, and seemed to us as we listened to sweep all the forces of religion into the channel of the Religious Life. And an old tutor, for whom we all had the greatest respect, rose and made a



most forcible protest in favour of the life of the good Christian and the good citizen living in the world. When he had done Father Benson made no apology and no explanation ; for indeed he had the way of the Bible, which is not to say all that is to be said at one time. He simply said, "I need not say that I agree with every word that has been said" ; and there he left it.

Truly, I do not think there was in him the slightest disposition to evacuate of force and meaning other modes of life and vocation ; he recognized that one man had his gifts in this way and another in that.

The other point I want to notice about his revival is that although he studied the ancient rules, and, I suppose, the rules of all the different Founders under whom the Religious Life has been lived, he never laid stress on any particular rule. The rule is a flexible, changeable thing, the circumstances in which the Religious Life is lived varying from age to age. What he laid stress on was the spirit, the motive, the permanent principle. Therefore he did not try to revive any particular ancient rule. He made a rule, as the other great Founders of Religious Communities made their rules, as seemed best adapted to the needs and necessities of the time.

## II

*Extracts from two Letters by Edward Churton,  
Bishop of Nassau, to his sister, Mrs. Inge.*

ADDINGTON HOUSE, NASSAU,

Nov. 12, 1893.

MY DEAR MARY,

Our delightful fortnight with Father Benson is nearly over. It has been a wonderful time, and I think our young men have profited much. —'s enthusiasm for him knows no bounds. For myself, I had always thought him nearly superhuman, and this opinion is confirmed now that I have had him as a guest in the house. One keeps on wondering to one's self how such a mind as his can have been produced. Fancy an old man like that—he is nearly seventy—giving us, four times a day, those marvellous meditations, in which sublime thoughts succeed one to another without a moment's hesitation, expressed always with a perfect accuracy and dignity, and often with a great fervour of eloquence ; and, so far as I could see, doing this without any previous preparation whatever. When he was not speaking to us in the chapel, he was either busy writing with the Hebrew Psalms before him, preparing for a new book, or else seeing us one after another for spiritual advice. For the meditations he had no notes whatever, and seemed to depend on nothing

but the inspiration of the moment. This is not all : he is, what I had not known before, a very agreeable talker, and, after all the stupendous effort of last week, sat talking to-day for an hour or more in the drawing-room to — and another young layman, besides coming to the Ordination and preaching two sermons besides. He is a sort of second Moses, whose force never abates. And then the indescribable sweetness of his character, which is never interfered with by the little sarcasms in which he delights. Yes, indeed, we have been highly blessed. I have had some good talks with him about the diocese. . . . He preached yesterday to crowded congregations at S. Agnes's and S. Matthew's. At S. Agnes's the crowd would probably have been equally great without his preaching, as Lowndes' great procession came there, all the way from S. Mary's, and the two congregations combined. But the sermon was, I am told, as simple as it was beautiful.

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ADDINGTON HOUSE, NASSAU,

*Sept. 5, 1898.*

[After observing with surprise that there is little or no reference to Father Benson in the biographies of Bishop Wilberforce and Dr. Pusey, the bishop continues.]

And yet I have no hesitation in calling Father Benson by far the most extraordinary man, and one of the most highly gifted, whom I ever met.

Well, Keble and Pusey have their monuments at Oxford: perhaps Cowley S. John will be Benson's, and will last as long as either the college or the library.

Not that I think that his conception of a Religious Order has been altogether suited to modern requirements. But he always seems to me more full of the supernatural holiness and power which come through divine grace acting on a wholly-surrendered will, than any one I ever saw. You can only describe him by his favourite Epistle to the Ephesians. One may grant that a great many, even of good people, have been wholly unimpressed by him, though I believe both Liddon and King have appreciated him fully.

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### III

*"An Appreciation" by the Rev. Darwell Stone, D.D., Principal of Pusey House, reprinted from "The Guardian."*

FOR the sake of a generation out of whose sight he had all but wholly passed some attempt must be made to show what manner of man Father Benson was. Almost on the surface was his stern sense of duty, linked with his belief in the reality of vocation, and it was significant that his great work sprang out of regard paid to duty at the cost of putting aside what was to him an attractive project. In 1859 he had arranged to go as a

missionary to India,<sup>1</sup> and all his preparations had been made, when the claims of parish work in the then rapidly-growing district of Cowley S. John held him back. It was characteristic that a much-wished-for plan was at the last moment promptly abandoned when the will of God that he should remain where he was became clear; and it was through this decision that the way eventually was open for founding his Order of Mission Priests. This sense of duty, this faithfulness to vocation, rested on a whole relation to God. To him God was central and supreme. The externals that he valued—the letter of Holy Scripture, the precise use of prayer, the Sacraments—were allowed their importance because they were means to the knowledge of God, and to union with God. The awfulness of sin, the need of prayer for sinners, took their place and form in his mind because sin was viewed as an outrage against the God Who is almighty and loving. His readiness to spare no effort for the benefit of any individual was based on his recognition of the divine claim for the allegiance of the soul. The vows of the Religious Life had their meaning because through them the soul was dedicated to God to a degree and after a manner which would not otherwise be. Humility was but a necessary consequence of the attitude which the creature must hold towards the Creator, on whom all created being depends. Self-denial was an instrument for clearer vision of God and closer conformity to the divine will.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 4, 227.

Many will remember the usefulness of his career, the services he rendered through Missions and Retreats, conducted either by himself or by members of the Society which he formed, the elevation in moral and spiritual standard of priests and lay people who came under his influence. But all such outward profit was dependent on that which was within. The Religious Life to him was not merely an instrument for effective or economical work, but a means of response to a personal call from the Living God, a means of seeking that perfection to which the call led. Through the intensity of this response came his spiritual insight, his wellnigh prophetic gift. Notwithstanding his real intellectual ability and equipment, there have been greater scholars, more highly-trained theologians, men of deeper learning and wider knowledge in the Church of England during the time of his activity. But he seemed to possess a distinctive force, to have penetrated further than others into the eternal realities, to have pierced more deeply into the unseen world. From other teachers more might be learnt in some matters ; others had qualities which were not his ; but because of this distinctive note there was something to be found in him which was not known elsewhere. Those who had eyes to see knew that this singular power and beauty had been gathered along the road of a self-sacrifice in which there were no reserves. And the "courage to gaze upon the Eternal Light" had made all his life to glow with a radiance from the glory of God.



## IV

*Extract from a Paper contributed by Father Puller  
to the "Cowley Evangelist," February, 1915*

I THINK that what impressed me most in Father Benson's life was the whole-heartedness of his self-surrender, his deadness to the world, his continual self-sacrifice arising out of his devotion to our Blessed LORD, all these qualities having their root in a life of faith in God, and in a continual consciousness of His presence.

These are not things that can be proved by the recounting of illustrative facts ; they are the deeply-graven impressions made on me by living in very close contact with Father Benson during several years, and I know that they are shared by others who have lived in close contact with the Father for a very much longer time than myself.

His life, when he was in possession of his full powers, used to seem to us feeblers almost miraculous. All day long, except when he was attending the Offices in church, or in chapel, or presiding at meals in refectory, or during the half-hour when he presided over the recreation in the Common Room, he would be getting through his immense correspondence, seeing people, visiting the sick and whole in the parish, and hearing confessions. And then, when after Compline the rest of the Community would be preparing to go to bed, the Father Founder's main work would begin. He spent most of the night in

prayer, study, and writing, sometimes not going to bed till 4 or even 6 a.m., and sometimes not going to bed at all, but getting a short sleep lying on the floor of his cell. I remember how one day we were astounded at finding on the library table three enormous volumes, each one considerably larger than an ordinary large folio, containing, in the Father Founder's handwriting, a full catalogue of all the books in the house, numbering at that time nine or ten thousand, and giving full particulars in regard to the author, the title, and the place and date of publication, and in the case of the more important books, giving the contents of each volume. No one had ever seen the Father making this catalogue, and no one had any idea that he was making it. It could only have been done at night when everybody else was asleep.

Every July the Community went into Retreat for four weeks, and the Father gave three addresses of about an hour each, every day (Sundays excepted, as we were not in Retreat on Sundays). But besides conducting the Retreat Father Benson was also carrying on the work of the parish, celebrating and saying Matins and Evensong, preaching in the Iron Church on Wednesdays and on the eves of Saints' Days, and three times on Sundays, and visiting the sick, and attending to other parochial duties.

In Holy Week, while taking all the preaching, including the Three Hours on Good Friday, he used to abstain from all food whatever from the evening of Maundy Thursday to 1 p.m. on Easter

Day. I am speaking of the time when I was living continuously with him ; and I learn to my astonishment that, so far as the strict fast was concerned, he carried on this practice to the very last Holy Week that he spent on earth. And even after he was ninety years old, on the day of intercession for the War last August, and again on January 2nd this year, the day preceding the national day of Intercession, he refused all food during the day, taking nothing at all on the first of these days, and on the second taking only a slight refectio shortly before he went to bed.

With all this great strictness to himself, he was full of tenderness towards others, refusing his consent to their doing anything which was beyond their strength. And again, it must not be supposed that his asceticism made him in any way austere or morose. On the contrary, at fitting times he would bubble over with laughter, and keep every one in a state of amusement with his humorous remarks.

In an article about Father Benson, which appeared the other day in one of the newspapers, the writer of it hazarded the opinion that Father Benson was a mediaevalist. No doubt, like most educated men who have had the opportunity of doing so, he had studied the ecclesiastical and secular history of the Middle Ages, as of other ages earlier and later ; but it would not have occurred to him, I think, to try and make the Society which he founded a reproduction of any of the mediaeval societies of monks or friars. He

did indeed study carefully Holstenius's *Codex Regularum Monasticarum*, a great work in three folio volumes, before putting together the rule of the Society of S. John the Evangelist ; but having learnt what his predecessors had done in their day, he, like them, wrote a rule of his own adapted to the circumstances of our day, preserving indeed the great permanent principles of the Religious Life, but arranging the details so as to make them suitable to a Religious Society existing in the Anglican Communion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As might be expected, Father Benson was wholly averse to anything like advertising, or to the use of superficial popular methods. He would have had a holy horror of anything like touting for postulants. He welcomed them when they came, but he only wanted them to come if they believed that God had Himself called them to the Religious Life ; and after they had come he was in favour of giving them a prolonged probation before accepting them for profession ; and he has been known to send away devout and able novices, who wished to remain, because he felt clear that they had no true vocation for the Religious Life.

Like Apollos, our dear Father was "mighty in the Scriptures." To the end of his life he fed his spiritual life continually upon them. In his earlier priestly life he had also been a diligent student of the holy Fathers, and he made the study of their writings obligatory on the members of his Society. But in preaching he hardly ever referred to them.

He taught what they taught, but he based his public teaching entirely on Holy Scripture. In acting thus he really followed the example of the Fathers themselves.

He believed with all his heart and soul in the Catholicity of the Church of England, and deplored everything which looked like disloyalty to her. Like all the great leaders of the Catholic movement, his great desire was to bring the people of England to the saving knowledge of CHRIST, and with that end in view to set before our countrymen the full Faith, as it has been handed down by Catholic tradition from the Apostles, and at the same time to avoid all needless changes in our methods of worship which would tend to put hindrances in the way of their accepting the Faith.

Father Benson came to man's estate and was ordained at a time when the Church of England had been wonderfully stirred up by a mighty movement, which had quickened her with new life, because the movement itself had been set in motion by the life-giving Spirit. He outlived nearly all his contemporaries, and now he himself has been taken. It remains for us who belong to his Society and for the Church at large to treasure his memory, and to cultivate the spirit of faith, self-surrender, and unworldliness which shone out so conspicuously in him. We shall thus be better able to transmit to future generations all the best results of the movement which so mightily wrought in him, and in the work which he was enabled to accomplish.



## V

*"A Pen Portrait" by B. W. M., reprinted from  
"The Church Times."*

A LITTLE, bent, and shrivelled old man, in a threadbare cassock and cloak, leaning against the wall of a house in the Iffley Road, reading a newspaper, so blind that he was obliged to hold the paper close to his eyes, entirely absorbed in what he was reading, and evidently unconscious of all that was going on around him. He looked very poor, as poor as many a beggar you might meet in the streets—emaciated, worn, and hungry, and very lonely. He made you feel as if you would like to give him over to some kindly person to look after him and take care of him. He wore a shovel-hat with a limp and frayed rim, green with age, and underneath there was a very white face, deeply lined and seamed and furrowed, giving the impression of one who had seen a good deal of suffering and hardship, and his eyes were dimmed by very thick glasses—a figure altogether unnoticeable, almost insignificant, except for its poverty and general appearance of shabbiness.

That is my recollection of the last time I saw Father Benson, some four or five years ago, just across the Magdalen Bridge, on the Iffley Road.

One of my first memories of him, about forty years before, is in the Mission House chapel, giving a Retreat to clergy.



It was the same figure, only less bent and not so shrivelled up with age, but thin and wiry and ascetic, though full of energy. Yet it always gave the impression of enduring a good deal of physical suffering, which he did his best to conceal : the face was much the same, though, of course, that of a much younger man, not in any way remarkable, except for the deep furrows with which it was lined. He wore an old-fashioned neckcloth, which had the appearance of being worn for several days, stockingless feet, and his girdle very tightly drawn around his waist.

He was giving an address in the little chapel at the top of the old Mission House, which is exposed to three out of the four winds of heaven. The chapel, like the preacher, was stern, unadorned, and uncompromising—no adornment except a Byzantine mosaic of our LORD over the altar. It was the embodiment of the poverty and detachment which were the key-notes of his teaching. There was certainly nothing inspiring in the surroundings. Yet the speaker was inspiring beyond any one I ever heard before or since. In ordinary conversation his voice was harsh and his speech hesitating almost to the point of a stammer. But as he spoke on that day, over forty years ago, there was neither harshness nor hesitancy. The modulations of his voice were like music, and his language and diction were perfect. The effect of what he said was heightened by the curious sense of detachment with which at such times he always impressed

his hearers. Those of us who lived with him knew really very little about him, except that he lived a very hard and secluded life. There was a general belief in the house that no food passed his lips from Maundy Thursday Eve till dinner on Easter Sunday ; and occasionally it got out that he had not been in bed all night, and certainly his teaching was uncompromising in the sternness of its demands.

Sitting there in the chapel, pouring forth a torrent of eloquence—if one can use such a word—untouched by the least trace of worldliness, indifferent to the judgements of others, and to all appearance above the ordinary weaknesses of mankind, his words gained an added force from his personality. He sat perfectly still, with an occasional uplifting of his hands and eyes, but otherwise without a motion. I had heard little of that kind of preaching before, and it took me and, I believe, most of those who heard him, by storm. There, in the chapel of the Mission House, he was at his best. He never raised his voice, and he used it with a natural art that was captivating. All that he said, and the way he said it, seemed perfectly spontaneous and free from any appearance of preparation or aiming at effect.

I heard many of his addresses in that chapel, spread over a period of many years, and for fertility and originality of thought, and the abundant gift of expression and illustration, I have never heard his equal. Sometimes he would give

an illustration at the beginning of an address, which he would unfold as he went on, weaving it in and out of the substance of his discourse with extraordinary skill and the most perfect artistic effect for the hour or more in which he was speaking. And yet he was not a popular preacher. In the pulpit his voice was harsh and his gesticulations often violent, and in both matter and expression he was above the heads of the congregation of an ordinary parish church.

Indeed, he was in no sense a public man. His influence, like himself, worked hiddenly. He had none of the equipment that would fit him for public life. Even amongst his own immediate associates he was not an easy person to talk to. I knew him perhaps as intimately as any of my contemporaries, yet I always found an interview somewhat alarming. As he once said, "I never knew any one intimately." His natural shyness and reserve, intensified by his theory of detachment, held him aloof from those who could gladly have given and received from him far more than he would allow. And yet he had a very tender heart, which on rare occasions showed how he really thirsted for human friendship and sympathy.

His work, great and far-reaching as it was for the Church which he loved and profoundly believed in, was limited by the marked limitations of a character that was deeply spiritual, utterly unworldly, and wholly free from any personal motives or ambitions.

## VI

*“A Memory,” by a Father of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, reprinted from “Comment and Criticism.”*

JUDGED of by merely natural considerations one would hardly have thought of him as the man best fitted to restore the Religious Life among priests in the Church of England, and to hold together, and guide, and rule for many years the very various types of men whom God called into the Society of S. John the Evangelist. Certainly he had great intellectual powers, and a strong and tenacious will ; but at the same time there was always a certain aloofness which made it difficult for others to approach him, or to live on intimate terms with him. He seemed to live habitually in a world where ordinary human sympathies were transcended, and only supernatural relationships counted. But no doubt it was this very characteristic, or rather what underlay it and was a chief cause of it, which enabled him, under God, to be the Founder of our Society. Those who came to Cowley to try their vocation must often have felt that there was nothing naturally attractive about either the place or the life or the Superior himself. All was marked by a spirit of poverty, bareness, and even austerity. But the spiritual power which radiated from the person and life of the Father Superior was the magnet which drew men, in spite of themselves and the shrinking of nature, to the

Society, and held them there. It was, I have often thought, something very similar to the power which drew to Port Royal not only the Sisters who formed the Community, but still more strikingly the solitaries who lived under the shadow of its walls. In both cases there was the same realization of that separation from the world, and deadness to it, which the Christian life, as understood and lived in the earliest days of the Church, involves. This was always what most struck one about our Father Founder—that he was a man who had really died to the world, and was “alive unto God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.”

I well remember the first time I saw him. It was during my undergraduate days at Oxford. In October, 1870, I was in a Retreat at Cowley, conducted by Father O'Neill. Father Benson had been away in London, but appeared in the chapel on the last morning of the Retreat. During the Celebration, Father O'Neill, just before he spoke the few closing words of the Retreat, knelt to receive the blessing of his Superior, who, if I remember right, was serving him at the altar. That was my first sight of him, and it has left behind, through all these years, an ineffaceable memory as of a man belonging to another world. The words of the blessing as he spoke them, the tone of the voice, the upward gaze of the eyes, all struck home to one's heart as the most intensely spiritual act one had ever witnessed. It was almost like a physical sensation of contact



with the spiritual world. Afterwards, when I used to make my confessions to him, it was the same. The words of counsel which he spoke, and the extempore prayer which he usually made before giving absolution, had the same mysterious power. One felt bathed in a supernatural peace, and quickened with a tingling consciousness of the reality and nearness of spiritual things. Later on, when in 1879 I became a postulant, and all through the years I lived under the same roof with him as a novice, and then as a professed Father, it was still the same. Every summer the Society went into Retreat for four consecutive weeks, during which the Father Superior gave us three meditations, or more often two meditations and a spiritual instruction, each day. He spoke from his stall in the bare and austere chapel at the top of the old Mission House, in the cold of winter (for we had also a week's Retreat at the beginning of each new year), or in the sometimes almost overpowering heat of the July sun as it smote all day long upon the slates of the roof, sitting perfectly still with only a frequent uplifting of his eyes as if he contemplated a vision, and pouring forth for an hour thoughts and words which carried one away into the world of spiritual realities. It was unlike any other discourse one has ever heard, spontaneous, copious, though often with a certain hesitation as if he were seeking for the exact word or phrase to express his thought, at times brilliant, epigrammatic, imaginative, and poetical, but always above



all things vibrating with an intensity of spiritual vitality and power. His books, though reproducing much of his habitual thoughts, and the peculiarities of his somewhat metaphysical diction, give no adequate idea of the unique force and effect of the spoken word in these Retreats. At such times it was above all an inspired word, what S. Paul, I suppose, meant by the gift of prophecy. But I despair of making any one who has never gone through the experience understand or realize more than in the faintest degree all it meant to those who lived with the Father, and heard him in these most intimate outpourings of his soul in communion with God. May the spirit which he thus impressed so deeply upon our Society continue to mould it, and bear fruit in it, now that he is no longer with us in the flesh.

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## VII

### LOSS AND GAIN

*A Sermon preached by Father Congreve in the Church of the Society at Cowley, on January 16, 1915, being the Sunday after Father Benson's death.*

“For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel’s shall save it.”—S. Mark viii. 35 (R.V.).

THE children who gather to their father’s funeral often spend the Sunday that follows at

home together. The Holy Communion unites them once more as a family, and the day passes perhaps with much rest and thankfulness for the grace of the good death they witnessed, and the deliverance of another Christian from the miseries of this sinful world. In the comfort and quiet of their old home they speak together of what each remembers of the past, and grow rich in thought as they recall the half-forgotten stories, and share happy recollections of the character and goodness of the father they have lost.

So for you who regard this church as a spiritual home I chose the above text, because it seems to express so much of what was most characteristic in our Father Founder who has left us.

The LORD's austere, uncompromising principle seems to me to express the main characteristic of our dear Father Founder's personality and career. I mean the sacrifice of a life, given, spent, worked out for CHRIST and the Gospel. I do not say the special distinction of his life was the force with which he preached CHRIST and His Cross. Many, perhaps, have caught something of the vigour of his address in Missions and Retreats. We used to come away from his sermon feeling more convinced than ever that CHRIST must be everything to the believer, or He will be nothing—that we cannot serve two masters—that if we are to win CHRIST there is always something to be joyfully lost for His sake. He had a rarely convincing way of pulverizing our self-indulgent

subterfuges, and sending the Gospel home to our hearts.

But that was not the characteristic for which we regarded him before all others as our spiritual father and leader. It was not his power of preaching, of speaking for God, remarkable as that was, that set him in our reverence above most of a generation of impressive preachers ; it was rather his personal life, the perfection with which his own sacrifice as Christian, Priest, and Religious was carried through practically and in detail to the end.

As we listened, year after year, to his addresses to the Community in our annual Retreat of four weeks—as we tried to follow, day after day, the appeal of that “high calling,” and of that upward gaze of a soul inwardly contemplating heaven, we felt that that eager straining toward the light above all clouds implied a very clean parting with everything else for God, and the leaving of all selfish considerations far below. We knew intuitively that that high calling which never wearied, and that upward gaze, were tokens of a life-surrender that was absolute and irrevocable—of a mind so firm, and a love so loyal, that he had attained to be himself living there where he was always calling us to climb.

All who followed his Missions and Retreats, and the faithful who eagerly listened to his sermons, Sunday after Sunday, in the Iron Church could feel that ; but we who lived with him in the old Mission House had other proofs of it.

We all had our daily Eucharist, the Divine Office, the daily time for mental prayer ; good times each day when we might recover a glimpse of our ideal, and hear at least a faint note of our high calling, and might be encouraged to look up again, and start afresh in the light towards the Light. But there was always one among us who was not content to catch a moment's glimpse of the Light which is the Life, but had left the darkness and all indecision behind for good, never to return to seek any earthly good that could take the place of God, or come in any degree between himself and God. Day and night it was always the same ; that movement towards God, the leaving behind of all that hindered that movement, was never relaxed. CHRIST was all to him, nothing besides could be worth troubling about for himself, for he had all things in CHRIST.

There, then, was the side of austerity, the parting with everything for CHRIST ; he never relaxed the strain of self-renunciation—it began even in his childhood. His governess told me how, going once into his room after bedtime, she found her little boy asleep on the floor under his cot. She promptly, and perhaps with a little pardonable impatience, put him to bed properly, and he complained—"How was he to learn to endure hardness if he might not sleep on the floor ?"

Gifted with a strong constitution, he knew no excuse for living softly. He was CHRIST's soldier and servant, called to practise the virtues of the

soldier—and with that ambition was led on to desire and practise the discipline of the Religious Life. Living with him through over forty years I have never once seen a trace of doubt or of depression yielded to for an instant, never a trace of flagging in the will to sustain the self-discipline that he was called to practise. When I told him the other day of our bishop's appointment of the Sunday of intercession for the War, and of the Saturday to prepare for it—he asked, “Did the bishop make that Saturday a fast?” I had not intended to mention the fast to an invalid in his ninety-first year, but as he specially inquired, I admitted that the diocesan had recommended that it should be kept as a fast. Afterwards I was surprised to find that he had tasted no food that day till bedtime.

The habit of self-discipline, of living a rough life like a soldier on campaign, hard on himself, became so fixed, so much his real self, that it looked more like a hardy soldier's indifference—who scarce notices discomforts on the march—than a virtue being consciously acquired.

We have all heard and read of lives, like the saint of to-day, Anthony in the desert, of extraordinary mortification and detachment—of persons in past ages who joyfully lost everything in the world to win CHRIST, but it was a strange experience for us to find ourselves actually living in the family of such a person—one who lived apparently untouched by self-consideration, self-pity, self-indulgence. Such self-renunciation, and cheerful



voluntary poverty as we had never seen before, and a certain strange elevation, made him master and leader unquestioned among us.

There must have been continually questions arising for him to decide as to how much of his time, money, rest, convenience should be given up for CHRIST, but, as far as we could learn, there was never any question as to the principle on which he would decide such matters of detail : that was always absolute—his self-sacrifice must be complete. His call was to a life dedicated in Religion under the three vows. This sacrifice included everything in the world. He kept nothing for himself that was not given. God asked of him all that he was, and his answer was the entire gift of himself ; he only lived in this world to complete the surrender.

He would never allow that examples of great self-sacrifice must be exceptional, and were to be wondered at—he would say great self-sacrifice belongs to ordinary Christianity, it should be normal by the grace of God. What is simpler ? We give ourselves to God in every Sacrament, in every prayer : one lives the rest of one's life in order to carry out the sacrifice, the gift of one's self to God, to completeness.

And so all the detail of every day came into our Father's sacrifice, united to the Holy Sacrifice that he offered at the altar every morning. But the personal sacrifice and surrender was always treated as a matter of course. Great love and self-denial brought great opportunities, and great



results of God's grace, but no one ever heard of them. A sacrifice, an act of self-denial, is a favour from God ; reverence hides it as God's secret. That is why such a life as our Father's can never be written, because no one knows its beauty but God, to Whom it was all given in hiddenness.

Every day was filled with spiritual work, constantly interrupted by necessary business matters, which he attended to without complaint. The greater part of the night, when interruptions were over, was given to long prayer and to correspondence. There was no confidant to share with him the secret of his endless labour. He seemed to be always alone in his work, that it might be unknown by men. The night brought his solace, when he could hide the day's work with God in his prayer. All that we could see was the humdrum endless routine, hours and days and months and years given to closely packed work without holiday—burden enough, one might suppose, to weigh down the spirit of man. But that monotony of labour was only the hiding of his real life, for in a moment, whenever the mechanical work brought him in touch with any soul, there was routine no longer, but the flash of spiritual joy in the LORD, the touch of light, and then the sick man, or the tradesman, or the schoolboy knew once more to his surprise that he had been speaking with one who lived above this world.

If his life of self-denial was hidden from the world, it could not be quite hidden from us, who

lived with him in a house in which there was no privacy, except privacy with God in prayer. And for us it was always a wonder. How could the body bear the strain of perpetual work without breaking down? How could the mind carry the burden of so many sinful souls entrusted to it, and all without relief of rest or change? The night explained the mystery, bringing long hours of quiet, without interruption, in which he could make up the time for his prayer, which work had deprived him of during the day. The Father who tidied his room next morning sometimes discovered signs that the Superior had found no time at all for his bed the previous night.

But though, in order that he might conquer and win himself for God, he had no pity on himself, he had the greatest consideration for others who were less strong in body, and had less courage of love in self-discipline. While keeping up his own stern self-sacrifice, he would help to make our life possible to us, and lead us on gently if he could, and step by step. He said to us, "If we cannot fast as our forefathers did, at least let us take our food as befits penitents; let us take our food with thankfulness that God does still give us a life, in which we have done so little that is profitable to Him." So he used to bear with and strengthen our weakness.

It is this tender consideration for others which distinguishes CHRIST's austerity from the self-

regarding contemptuous austerity of the pagan ascetic. I have letters from him written in the spirit of S. Paul, as of a nurse cherishing her children. Yesterday, one who long ago wished to join us, and was prevented by breakdown in health, wrote to me: "I shall ever treasure in memory the tenderness he showed me when I was ill, when he came to the hospital to see me, and tell me that I could not return to Cowley except as a visitor, but in that way as often as I liked. I remember his arm put round me so kindly, as he comforted me and tried to console me in my disappointment. *Requiescat in pace.* God reward him, and may he pray for me still."

I have tried to hint to you that God was worth to him more than all that he could part with besides ; all that he let go and lost in order to win CHRIST, was as nothing. He was always wearing out his life for CHRIST and the Gospel—losing his life, some might say, throwing away the advantages he was born to—but always with tender consideration and encouragement for less courageous spirits.

One word to give you a glimpse of the life that was saved by his sacrifice. Here he is on a voyage to America, very much alone in a crowd of fellow passengers, but spending hours in intense happiness in his prayer, and the study of the Psalms of David. Writing on board the *Republic*, November 4, 1880, to one of the Fathers, he says :

"We are just off Sandy Hook. The voyage

has been beautiful. Several times I have been able to say the Office with porthole open, and my face towards the great expanse of waters, the waters below the firmament, the waters of the mid-heavens, and high, unseen, the glorious waters of the bow like unto an emerald, and the solid glassy sea like unto crystal, no longer moving like the wide waste below, but established in the accomplished truth, and perfected in the bright purity of the throne of God. . . . Since S. Simon and S. Jude's Day I have been keeping the voyage in active company with King David, and learning some little more of the delight of that inexhaustible treasury. It is enough to make a saloon or any other place happy, only one does wish that one could make people round about know something of the happiness that they might have in the Psalter if they would. How strange it is to think that one can have such an intense secret of happiness, and that the people round about should be so utterly ignorant of the pleasure within their reach. It makes one wonder why God should have been pleased to reveal such a delight to oneself. One ought to be very thankful."

Or here in his prayer he contemplates salvation—what he gains by the loss of everything in this world :

"O JESU, blessed Saviour, let me know Thee as my Life, and live for Thee by Thy grace. . . . Who can tell the glory of Thy salvation, but by becoming one with Thee, the saving Word?

Who can experience the joy of Thy salvation, but by abiding in Thee, the Well-Beloved of the FATHER? Who can know the strength of Thy salvation, but by acting in Thy HOLY SPIRIT, bearing the Cross as Thou hast borne it? Oh, teach me to live in Thee, dead to the world, that in Thee I may die, alive to God for evermore.”<sup>1</sup>

Let our intention for this Eucharist be to lift up in thanksgiving to God, along with CHRIST'S Sacrifice on the Cross, a life lost to self for the love of God and saved in CHRIST, for Whom our Father Founder counted not his life dear to himself; and to ask more grace for ourselves—that we may have courage to let everything else go for CHRIST, and to persevere to the end in our response to His upward calling.

<sup>1</sup> *Advent Readings*, p. 292.

“ ‘ Rest, Warrior, rest ! ’ we used to say  
When earth’s great Victors passed away,  
But we,—the old who live to tell  
How fierce the brunt of battle fell  
On this strong Champion of the LORD,  
In those far years in which he warred,  
—We scarce can pause to praise his ‘ *Rest* ’  
In God’s fair Garden of the Blest,  
But reach beyond, and strain to see  
In those eternal years to be,  
What *Work* God keeps of greater grace  
For him who ‘ serving sees His Face. ’ ”

W. H. D.



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